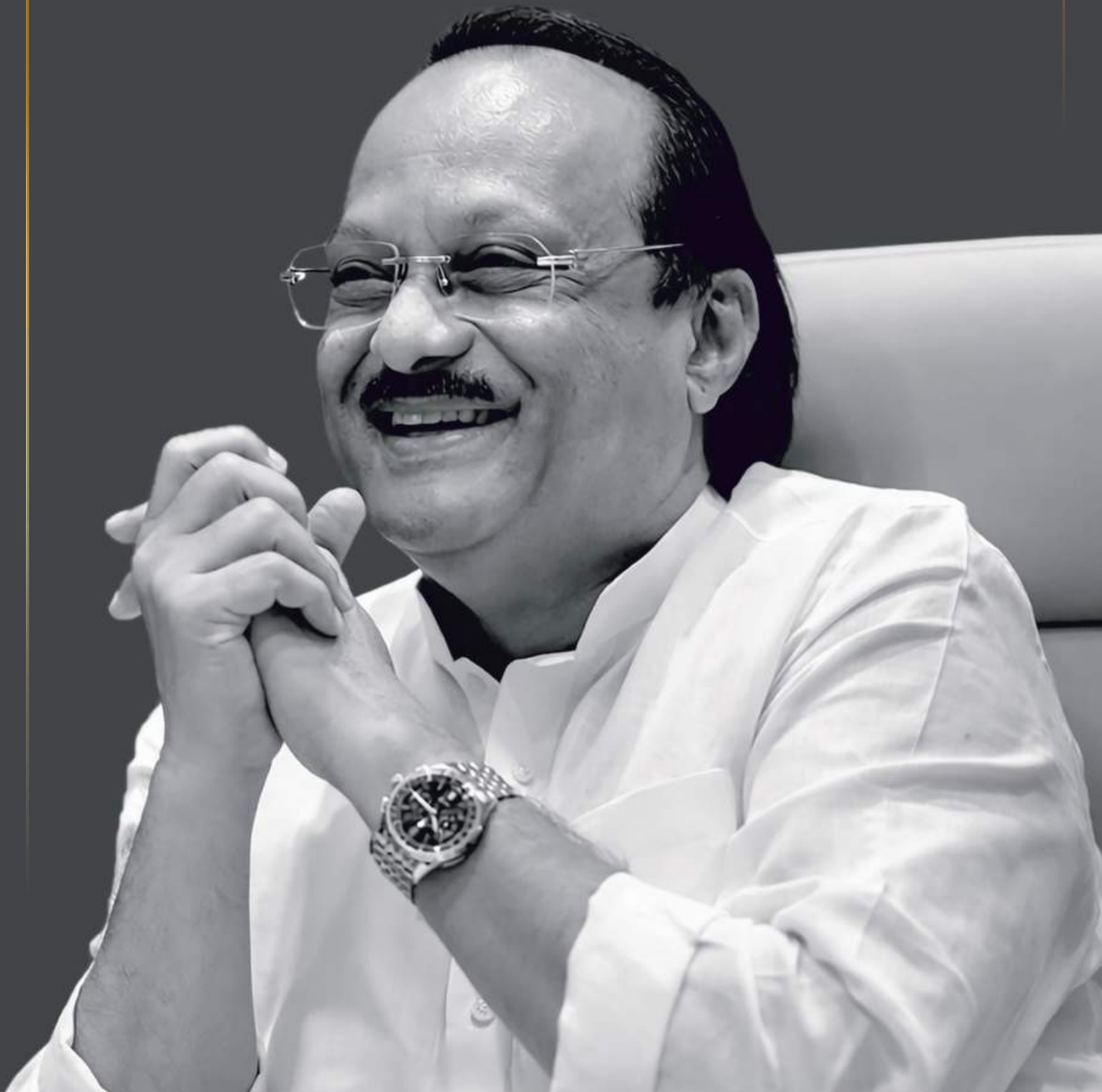




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Tehran warns Bulgaria against aiding US military ops

Reuters
Dubai, July 21

IRAN'S FOREIGN Ministry spokesman warned Bulgaria on Tuesday against allowing the US to use its territory for military operations against Iran.

The Bulgarian government has said it will seek parliamentary approval to station up to eight US tanker aircraft at an air base in the Balkan country, which is a member of NATO and the European Union.

Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said any activity that facilitates US attacks on Iran would amount to complicity in what he described as "aggression and war crimes", according to Iranian state media.

Baghaei urged Bulgaria not to become "an accomplice of aggressors and lawbreakers", they said. The tanker aircraft are mainly used for airborne refuelling of other aircraft.

Bulgaria's government aims to station the US aircraft at the Bezmer military facility, about 260 km (160 miles) southeast of the capital Sofia.

The US and Iran have intensified strikes since an interim ceasefire deal signed a month ago unravelled, raising the possibility of a return to all-out war.

U.S. FORCES BOMB TARGETS IN SOUTH AND WEST OF IRAN

Will be hitting Pickaxe Mountain area pretty soon, says Trump

Reuters
Washington, Dubai, July 21

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Tuesday said the US will be hitting the Pickaxe Mountain area, located near Iran's heavily damaged Natanz uranium enrichment facility, "pretty soon."

Pickaxe Mountain is a heavily fortified site that hosts two deeply buried tunnel complexes that experts assess as beyond the reach of the most powerful bunker buster bombs in the US arsenal. The site is linked to Iran's nuclear program.

Trump also said that the US would respond if Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi movement follows through on its threat to impose a blockade on commercial shipping in the Red Sea, saying that if the group takes action, the United States "will just have to take care of business."

But the Houthi announcement already appeared to be having an impact. Two tankers which had just loaded Saudi crude bound for China and India at Saudi Arabia's Red Sea port of Yanbu made U-turns on Tuesday, heading towards the Suez Canal rather than out through the Bab el-Mandeb



US President Donald Trump with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun at the White House on Tuesday. AP

into the Indian Ocean.

US forces bombed targets in the south and west of Iran overnight, while Tehran targeted US sites in Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan and a tanker was hit in the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf.

Iran said it had struck infrastructure belonging to Amazon in Bahrain, where the US tech

company operates a regional data centre.

Amazon did not immediately comment and Reuters could not verify the report. US Central Command said it had hit Iranian military command centres, maritime capabilities, missile and drone launch sites and air defence systems in its latest round of strikes, which have

carried on nightly for more than a week and a half.

Explosions were heard around the city of Shiraz in southern Iran, state media said. Konarak and Chabahar on the southern coast, the city of Khorramabad and a civilian site outside the city of Abadan, both in the west, all came under attack, media reports said.

US vows to help Lebanon during leaders' meeting

Associated Press
Washington, July 21

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump pledged to help Lebanon "a lot" during a White House meeting on Tuesday with the country's leader, Joseph Aoun, who came to push for long-term calm after months of war between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group.

"It's been a very badly treated place and country and we're going to have it properly treated and treated with the respect it deserves," Trump told Aoun during a meeting which wrapped up the Lebanese leader's four-day visit to Washington. "We're gonna help it a lot," he said, without giving concrete details.

The US has pushed for peace in Lebanon but been increasingly distracted by a new round of escalation with the war in Iran, which has destabilised much of West Asia.

British-Indian Narayan named Britain's first minister for AI

Aditi Khanna
London, July 21

BRITISH PRIME Minister Andy Burnham finalised his top team within hours of taking charge at 10 Downing Street and promoted British Indian minister for artificial intelligence (AI) Kanishka Narayan to the Cabinet, and purging allies of predecessor Keir Starmer from the government.

Burnham, who was invited to form the government by King Charles on Monday, set about unveiling the team of ministers who will join him around the Cabinet table soon after.

Lisa Nandy is another Indian-origin minister who holds on to her department, with additional responsibilities as Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Narayan said his elevation, as Minister for AI, falling jointly within the Cabinet Office and the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade, is a sign of the new PM's "deep commitment to AI's importance". "AI is likely the most significant technology in human history. Its impact will dwarf other things. The best case for it is compelling beyond our dreams: a reindustrialised Britain, stronger national security, public services transformed for the better," said Narayan, who was elected as the first Indian-origin member of Parliament from Wales in the July 2024 general election.

The 36-year-old Bihar-born Labour MP for the Vale of Glamorgan, who held the AI brief as a junior minister in former prime minister Keir Starmer's team, pledged to act with "pace and ambition" and "focus relentlessly on securing British influence in shaping AI".

"I will also bring to this job the place I represent a consti-

THE NEW FACES

New British Prime Minister Andy Burnham named his ministerial team on Monday. Here are some who have been given the top jobs in the new government



JOHN HEALEY,
CHANCELLOR OF
THE EXCHEQUER



WES STREETING,
DEFENCE
SECRETARY



MIATTA
FAHNBULLEH,
ENERGY SECRETARY



ED MILIBAND
FOREIGN
SECRETARY



YVETTE COOPER,
HEALTH
SECRETARY



KANISHKA
NARAYAN,
AI SECRETARY

tuency in Wales, a nation with industry and ambition at its heart, a proud history of punching above its weight on the global stage. A nation which welcomed a 12-year old and his family, gave us the best chance at opportunity, put me in Parliament as Wales' first ethnic minority MP, and now affords me the chance to make a mark in Cabinet," he said.

With roots in Muzaffarpur, Narayan's family moved to the Welsh capital of Cardiff when he was a little boy. He studied at Oxford and Stanford universities before entering politics after a stint in the private sector and has been vocal about the importance of the India-UK ties.

Meanwhile, Lisa Nandy is reappointed to the ministerial role she has been in charge of

since July 2024 with the additional responsibility for digital services too.

The 44-year-old Manchester-born daughter of Calcutta-born academic Dipak Nandy and English mother Luise Byers is a close ally of Burnham as his Makerfield constituency neighbour in Wigan, within the Greater Manchester region. In the lead-up to the elevation of the region's former mayor to prime minister, she vouched for her new boss being "faster and bolder" in the Labour Party's reform agenda.

Among the other key Cabinet appointments, South Asian heritage Shabana Mahmood holds on to her role as Home Secretary, which she described as "the best job in the business". PTI

Israel building earthen barrier inside Gaza, dividing the strip

Lee Keath & Julia Frankel
Cairo, July 21

THE ISRAELI military is quietly but quickly building a giant earthen barrier separating the over 50% of the Gaza Strip it controls from the rest of the territory, according to satellite imagery, further entrenching the division of the tiny Palestinian enclave.

More than 23 kilometers (14 miles) have been constructed in recent months, running through Palestinian communities demolished by the military. That is equivalent to more than half the length of the coastal strip, which is some 40 kilometers long and 11 kilometers wide, and home to over 2 million Palestinians.

When presented with the satellite images, Israel's mili-



A satellite image from Planet Labs PBC shows a section of an earthen barrier being built in Gaza. AP

tary confirmed to The Associated Press it has built a physical barrier in the area of the so-called yellow line, the boundary to which Israeli troops withdrew under the October

ceasefire deal with Hamas.

The line was envisioned in the US-backed agreement as a temporary division of the territory pending a fuller Israeli withdrawal. AP

Trump govt opens probe into Harvard's financial aid for international students

Associated Press
Washington, July 21

THE JUSTICE Department is investigating whether Harvard University is allowing Chinese donors to create scholarships that exclude American students, adding to the barrage of federal inquiries the Trump administration has opened in its battle against the Ivy League school.

Justice Department officials announced the new review Monday, saying Harvard's foreign funding disclosures "raised concerns" about possible discrimination against US students. The agency did not specify which scholarship programs are being targeted and emphasized it "has not reached any conclusions." The investi-



Harvard University campus

gation is aimed at Harvard's "China-based financial aid programs," the Justice Department said. The agency said Chinese donors have given money to Harvard to support financial aid programs limited to students from certain countries. That restriction could amount to illegal discrimination based on country of origin, the de-

partment said.

"Schools cannot take federal dollars and then turn around and accept money from foreign sources to give financial aid that deliberately excludes American citizens - doing so is illegal, and we will stop it wherever we find it," said Harmeet Dhillon, who leads the department's Civil Rights Division.

Harvard said it was reviewing the Justice Department notice. "Harvard follows the law for required reporting of donations and, consistent with our legal obligations under Title VI, does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin in allocating financial aid," the university said in a written statement.

EAST ASIAN CRIME SYNDICATES ARE RUNNING BUSINESSES THAT USE MALWARE, GENERATIVE AI AND DEEPPAKES FOR SEXUAL EXTORTION AND EXPLOITATION

UN: International criminal groups using technology to expand in and beyond Asia

Associated Press
Bangkok, July 21

SOUTHEAST ASIA-BASED criminal groups are using increasingly integrated networks and technology to build a rapidly growing illicit economy with tentacles that reach far beyond Asia, with scams alone causing estimated combined losses of \$88.3 billion to \$114.1 billion in 2025, a UN report says.

The report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime outlines how transnational crime that used to be concentrated in Southeast Asia has expanded to other regions, while global criminal groups are increasingly engaging in drug,

human and wildlife trafficking in Asia. Criminals are using new technologies to launder money through global financial systems and using artificial intelligence to steal from victims worldwide, said the report, released Tuesday. One key finding of the report is the threat to children both from AI and from online gaming, as hundreds of scam compounds scattered across Southeast Asia provide venues for sex trafficking and selling of child sexual abuse content.

"There is a huge jump in AI-generated child sexual images... communicated through encrypted communications platforms," said Inshik Sim, UNODC researcher and coordinator for

the report, told reporters at a briefing at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand.

East Asian crime syndicates are running businesses that use malware, generative AI and deepfakes for sexual extortion and exploitation in a trend that increases risks of in-person abuse as well as livestreamed abuse and grooming of victims. Apart from outright trafficking for the sex industry, victims can be sold into domestic servitude, forced begging and forced labor, among other forms of exploitation, the report says.

Social media and online gaming and gambling also pose dangers for children, the report notes, citing surveys showing



An estimated loss of \$88.3 billion to \$114.1 bn was reported in 2025. AP

that hundreds of children and teens across Southeast Asia are engaged in online gambling, some to the extent of addiction.

billion, with seizures of illegal shipments soaring. That includes methamphetamines, heroin and ketamine.

It points to the Sulu-Celebes maritime "triangle" between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines as an increasingly important corridor for shipments of cocaine from Latin America to Asia, with illicit cargoes sometimes embedded in legitimate shipments such as Chinese tea.

The area is also often used for smuggling of wildlife and small arms, the report says.

Meanwhile, Thailand and Vietnam increasingly are the source of cannabis sent to Japan, where it is illegal, and to Europe, it says. Earlier this year, author-

BRIEFLY

NEPAL

PM Balen Shah likely to meet Indian, Chinese envoys soon



Nepal PM Balen Shah

AFTER FOUR months in power, PM Balen Shah has finally agreed to meet the envoys of India and China, said a close aide. "PM Shah will soon be meeting the ambassadors of two immediate neighbours, India and China. He will be meeting them soon," the aide told The Indian Express, adding that the dates are yet to be worked out. As pressure built on Shah from his ministers, party MPs and the Opposition — who warned him that undermining Parliament and bypassing diplomatic practices will be detrimental to Nepal's as well as his own image — Shah seems to have relented. In the past ten days, the PM also held separate meetings with leaders of business and industries, as well as women entrepreneurs, promising all possible support from the government to create an investment-friendly environment. "Last week, he also decided to meet the envoys of India and China — something Foreign Affairs Minister Shisir Khanal had been suggesting," sources said. REUTERS

VIETNAM

Bus bursts into flames after crash, 7 killed

SEVEN PEOPLE died and five were injured when a bus carrying passengers overnight burst into flames after crashing into roadside embankments near southern Vietnam's Dong Nai City early Monday, authorities said. State media VN Express said that the accident took place at around 2:30 a.m., when the bus veered off the road and struck an embankment. It continued moving before hitting a second embankment and coming to a stop. AP

GREECE

Man stabs tourists near the Acropolis

A MAN stabbed and wounded two tourists Tuesday morning near the ancient Acropolis in Athens, Greece's top tourist attraction, police said, in what appeared to be a random attack. The assailant, identified only as a 60-year-old Greek man, attacked a Greek American couple with a knife on a pedestrian street near an entrance to the archaeological site and near the entrance to the Acropolis Museum, which lies at the foot of the Acropolis hill. AP

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

NEPAL

Govt withdraws 3% tax on pvt education, health

NEPAL GOVERNMENT on Tuesday withdrew the three per cent equity tax imposed on private education and health sectors following widespread public criticism. In a social media post, PM Balendra Shah said the decision was taken after the proposed levy triggered concerns over additional financial burden on the public. PTI

PAKISTAN

12 people killed in rain-related incidents in KPK

AT LEAST 12 people, including five children, have been killed and 18 injured in various incidents triggered by heavy rains and flash floods across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, authorities said on Tuesday. The casualties occurred due to collapsing roofs and walls of houses, as well as people being swept away by flash floods, according to a report PDMA. PTI

Philippines, China summon each other's envoys over South China Sea incident

Reuters
Beijing, Manila, July 21

PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will summon China's ambassador in Manila, his office said on Tuesday, hours after Manila's envoy in Beijing was similarly summoned following accusations by both sides of provoking tensions in the contested South China Sea.

Presidential Communications Undersecretary Claire Castro confirmed to reporters Marcos had summoned Chinese Ambassador Jing Quan at 5 pm on Tuesday.

The summoning of ambassadors comes a day after the

Philippines and China accused each other an encounter in the Second Thomas Shoal of the South China Sea. Philippine officials said one of its navy personnel was struck on the head but Beijing said Manila provoked the incident.

"The Philippine side provoked the incident first, yet has turned around and made counter-accusations, distorted the facts and engaged in malicious hype," the Chinese foreign ministry said. The CCG said two rubber boats sent by the Philippines' grounded vessel BRP Sierra Madre rammed into a Chinese patrol boat in the South China Sea.

Satellite communications also enable scam compounds to operate in places that are remote or subject to close surveillance.

To counter this growing criminal ecosystem, authorities need a coordinated, cross-border strategy that integrates enforcement across data, communications and financial systems, and online services and marketplaces, the report said.

As authorities in Thailand, China and elsewhere have raided industrial-sized scam centres mostly located in border regions of Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, criminals have responded by shifting to other parts of the world or operating on a smaller scale. AP



POLICE, CENTRE UNDER FIRE OVER CRACKDOWN ON PROTESTERS; PAWAR, UDDHAV, KEJRIWAL GO TO JANTAR MANTAR

Opposition rallies behind protesters, LoP holds sit-in outside PM residence



Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and SP's Akhilesh Yadav being detained outside the PM's residence, Tuesday. ABHINAV SAHA

Rahul, Priyanka, Akhilesh detained; Cong chose spectacle over debate, says Pradhan

Manoj C G & Asad Rehman
New Delhi, July 21

A DAY after police used tear gas and lathis to stop thousands of young protesters from marching towards Parliament to seek the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over exam paper leaks, Opposition parties rallied behind them Tuesday, visiting the protest site, meeting the injured, echoing

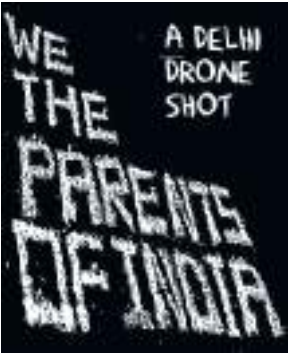
their demands and staging a sit-in outside the Prime Minister's residence in New Delhi. Turning up the heat on the government, Opposition leaders slammed the police use of force against the protesters, many of them students, and targeted the government by calling it "insensitive" and "authoritarian". Joining the chorus for Pradhan's resignation, the Congress staged a sit-in outside the Prime

Minister's residence at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg. Top leaders detained after a nearly three-hour protest included Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Congress leader and MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav. They were released later.

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Business as Usual

By EP UNNY



Future of youth beyond politics, says PM, calls for 'foolproof' exams

Liz Mathew, Jatin Anand & Anonna Dutt
New Delhi, July 21

IN FIRST remarks after police cracked down on Cockroach Janta Party-led protesters marching towards Parliament to press for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while defending the steps taken by his government in the wake of the NEET-UG question paper leak, called for a "foolproof system" to prevent any future occurrence of an exam paper leak. Speaking at a meeting of NDA parliamentary party leaders Tuesday, Modi suggested that MPs take the lead in reaching out to students across the nation on the issue, underlining that the future of the youth was top priority and all parties should treat it as a national issue rather than an opportunity for partisan politics. He promised the "strictest possible punishment" to those



Union Health Minister J P Nadda with an injured person at Lady Hardinge Hospital, Tuesday. PTI

behind the NEET paper leak. "Ek ek ko dandit karna hoga (each one of them has to be punished)," he was quoted as having said.

Following the meeting, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the Prime Minister sought a "foolproof system" to prevent future exam paper leaks. "On the NEET examination, the Prime Minister said the

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Govt signal: Ready for debate, demand for resignation political

Ritika Chopra
Mumbai, July 21

THE DEMAND for the Education Minister's resignation is "political" and there's no "succumbing" to it; the lapses behind the NEET leak have been fixed; admissions under the three largest entrance examinations, NEET retest, CUET and JEE Main, are largely on track; and the Government is open to a debate on the issue in Parliament. This was the "official" sense at the senior level of the Government Tuesday, a day after the Jantar Mantar protests,

which started with the NEET leak controversy, intensified leading to a police crackdown in the heart of the capital. In conversations with *The Indian Express*, senior government functionaries said the Centre has no intention of yielding to demands for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation, arguing that it has neither denied the lapses nor attempted to evade responsibility. "There was a problem. We have said this on record and have taken responsibility on

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INSIDE



AFTER HC NOD, SONAM MOVED TO PRIVATE HOSPITAL

PAGE 8

EDUCATION'S FALLING BUDGET SHARE IN 12 YRS

EXPLAINED, P 14

Day after, injured back at Jantar Mantar protest site: 'Weak in body, not in resolve'

Tabshir Shams, Drishti Jain & Vidheesha Kuntamalla
New Delhi, July 21

A TEACHER, an unemployed graduate, a clothing shop owner, a student, shop worker, a social worker, and many more. Several protesters who had spent Monday night in hospital after being injured in the police crackdown on the CJP-led

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Some of the injured protesters at Jantar Mantar, Tuesday. ABHINAV SAHA

20 dead after blast at under-construction tunnel in Sikkim

5 trapped; methane gas leak suspected

Sweetie Kumari
Kolkata, July 21

A BLAST that officials suspect was caused by a methane gas leak inside an under-construction tunnel in Sikkim's Namchi district on Monday has led to the death of at least 20 people and left five others trapped.

The incident occurred inside a seven-km under-construction tunnel of the Teesta Stage-VI Hydroelectric Project near Samardung. Those at the site at the time of the incident included high-level personnel from the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation and project developer Patel Engineering, who were on a routine inspection. "Out of those 25 trapped inside the tunnel, 20 are confirmed dead," Namchi

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



An ambulance at the under-construction tunnel in Sikkim's Namchi district, Tuesday. PTI

Happening today

● **UNION MINISTER** S Jaishankar to be in Philippines for a two-day visit, during which he will attend meetings under ASEAN framework and also meet his counterparts from Quad countries. **P 5**

● **THE RAM TEMPLE TRUST** will hold its second meeting amid the donation 'theft' row.

NATION

SENA (UBT) MOVES SC AGAINST 6 MPs' MERGER WITH SHINDE PARTY **P 5**

India summons Russia envoy over killing of 4 sailors: 'Grave concern'



Russian Charge d'Affaires Vladimir Ladanov at the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

MEA: Targeting of commercial shipping is unacceptable

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, July 21

INDIA ON Tuesday summoned the Russian Charge d'Affaires (CDA) and conveyed "unequivocal condemnation" and "grave concern" over the deaths of four Indian seafarers in a Russian missile strike on a merchant vessel off the coast of Ukraine.

"Today, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, Mr Vladimir Ladanov, was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs. The Ministry conveyed India's grave concerns and unequivocal condemnation of the attack on the commercial vessel *MV Golden Leo* on 19 July 2026, which resulted in the tragic loss of four Indian lives, emphasising that such attacks undermine the safety, security and stability of international maritime commerce," the MEA said in a statement. "The Russian Chargé d'Affaires was requested to convey India's strong concerns to his

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

● MARTYRS' DAY REVELATIONS

Mamata remains crowd puller, 'rebel TMC' unimpressive, Cong springs surprise

Ravik Bhattacharya & Atri Mitra
Kolkata, July 21

THE COMPETING July 21 Martyrs' Day programmes, the first since the Suvendu Adhikari-led BJP government took charge, across Kolkata laid bare the shifting political ground within the Trinamool Congress (TMC). While former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee drew a large turnout despite recent setbacks and organisational turmoil, rival TMC

factions struggled to mobilise support, even as the Congress surprised observers with a massive gathering.

Mamata's rally near the Birla Planetarium witnessed thousands of supporters spilling onto adjoining roads through the afternoon. Not very far away on Mayo Road, the rebel TMC faction led by Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly (LoP) Ritabrata Banerjee saw a comparatively thin gathering. In Delhi, another breakaway



PARTHA PAUL



EXPRESS



EXPRESS

TMC chief Mamata Banerjee at party's rally near Birla Planetarium; rebel TMC MLAs Firhad Hakim and Ritabrata Banerjee at Mayo Road, Congress rally in Kolkata, Tuesday.

group comprising 20 Lok Sabha MPs led by Sudip Banerjee and Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, now merged with the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI), observed Martyrs' Day at Rajghat.

The annual July 21 rally commemorates the 13 Youth Congress workers who were killed in police firing during a march to the then state secretariat Writers' Building in 1993. For two decades after TMC came to power, the event remained one of Kolkata's biggest

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Cauvery cause

Police keep watch as farmers bury themselves in the sand on the Cauvery riverbed, while staging a protest to block or limit the release of the river water to Tamil Nadu, in Tiruchirappalli district on Tuesday. PTI

Provide feedback on Aravallis: SC panel opens 21-day window for inputs

Nikhil Ghanekar
New Delhi, July 21

THE HIGH-POWERED Committee constituted by the Supreme Court to examine issues surrounding the Aravalli Hills and Ranges Tuesday officially sought representations, suggestions, and inputs from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including the states across which the range spans.

According to a government press release, the panel has invited comments from environmentalists, conservationists, non-profit organisations, mining leaseholders, project proponents, villagers, farmers, mine workers, and local communities whose livelihoods and well-being are intrinsically tied to the region's biodiversity.

Submissions, supported "to the extent possible" by documentary evidence or verifiable material, must be submitted via email or an official Google Form within 21 days of the notice.

The Supreme Court established the panel under the leadership of Kanchan Devi, Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), to obtain a "fair, impartial, and independent" assessment.

The committee's mandate is to resolve critical ambiguities in an October 2025 report submitted by an Environment Secretary-led panel. The panel is scheduled to submit its comprehensive report to the court by August 31.

Previously, a SC bench com-

Omar: Statehood demand key to restoring J&K's constitutional guarantees

Naveed Iqbal
Srinagar, July 21

A DAY after he led a protest in Delhi seeking restoration of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah emphasised that the demand for statehood is foundational to restore constitutional guarantees to J&K.

"What does (Article) 370 or 371 mean without statehood? A union territory has no powers. There is no state list or a concurrent list, and that is the whole fight. Any special status that is accorded to J&K — whether it is 370 or something else — it will come down to how the Centre and state share power and the Centre does not share power with a UT," the CM said on Tuesday in reference to criticism that the NC is restricting its protest to statehood and not discussing the restoration of constitutional guarantees under Article 370.

Underlining that the party was done waiting for statehood, the NC decided in June to take its demand to New Delhi on the first day of the monsoon session of Parliament. The protest, however, was eclipsed by the Cockroach Janta Party's march from Jantar Mantar to Parliament, and many INDIA alliance partners also gave it a miss.

Party president Farooq Abdullah led party members

through the streets, but they could not reach Central Delhi. "The police had offered us Ramila Maidan as an alternate venue, but we did not accept that," Omar said.

The NC had invited several national leaders and parties, including Congress Parliamentary Party leader Sonia Gandhi, to join their demand for statehood, but only Congress leaders who are alliance partners in the J&K government were seen walking along the NC legislators in the capital.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Omar said that while many of them had committed to joining the protest, the leaders were unable to reach the venue. "A few of them spoke to me; they just weren't able to reach there. We had a commitment from TMC, NCP, DMK, SP among others. Within the INDIA bloc, we were sure they would join. But the situation (in Delhi) was just chaotic; I don't blame them," Omar said.

Omar asserted that the protest in Delhi is just the beginning and a reminder to the central government of its word both in Parliament as well as to the Supreme Court. "They have to tell us what the 'uchit samay' (appropriate time) for restoration of statehood is," he said, adding that Farooq Abdullah will take a call on the organisational efforts towards escalating this demand.

[FROM PAGE 1 | FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM]

Opp sit-in

Gandhi was taken to Chhatrasal Stadium in the Model Town area and Vadra to Mandir Marg police station. Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi reached the Mandir Marg police station while Congress workers showed up at the Chhatrasal stadium.

The government said it had agreed to Rahul Gandhi's demand for a discussion in Parliament on the issue of paper leaks, but he later went back on his word and insisted that Pradhan must resign.

Late at night, Pradhan, in a post on X, hit out at Gandhi and the Congress, saying they "continue to shamelessly exploit students as political tools to manufacture disruption during the Monsoon Session of Parliament".

Criticising them for "causing inconvenience to the public and disregarding established security protocols" by staging a dharna outside the PM's residence, he said, "Even after the Government conveyed its readiness for a comprehensive discussion, the Congress chose political spectacle over democratic debate. Their objective was never solutions for students, it was disruption for political headlines. For Rahul Gandhi, this is not about students. This is about manufacturing confront-

tation after every genuine avenue for discussion has been opened."

"Our Government remains 100% committed to discussing NEET and addressing every genuine concern of our youth on the floor of the House. The students of India deserve far better than being treated as props in a political campaign. They deserve certainty over chaos, solutions over slogans and responsibility over disruption. We owe our students more than outrage. We owe them answers, reforms and accountability. That is exactly what our government remains committed to delivering," Pradhan said.

In the afternoon, hours after Gandhi and Vadra visited injured protesters at the RML Hospital, Congress MPs received a message from AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal asking them to "reach 10, Rajaji Marg, New Delhi at 3 pm today ... to formally greet Congress president on his birthday."

When they showed up at Karge's residence, they were told about the march to the PM's residence. It left some of the MPs surprised, one of whom told *The Indian Express* that the leaders didn't tell them in advance about the sit-in because they didn't want to alert the police.

Kerala Chief Minister V D Saithesyan was in Kerala House when he came to know about the sit-in and joined his col-

leagues. But he left after some time.

In a social media post from the protest site, Gandhi urged "every patriotic Indian who believes our students deserve justice" to join the dharna.

Following his call, NCP (Sharad Pawar) leader Supriya Sule and SP's Akhilesh Yadav joined the protest.

The government dispatched Minister of State Jitendra Singh to speak to Gandhi. Singh said Gandhi initially demanded that the government agree to a discussion in Parliament on the NEET issue and the ongoing protest at Jantar Mantar. "Within a few moments, after taking permission from the government's top leadership, Shri Rahul Gandhi was assured that his demand had been accepted... the government is ready to discuss in Parliament all issues related to NEET and the associated movement," Singh wrote on X.

According to Singh, when Gandhi was informed about this, he went back on his word and sought an assurance on Pradhan's resignation. "When an attempt was made to humbly explain to him that for a senior leader like him to backtrack from his word so quickly does not befit him, he said that it is his prerogative. When the Home Secretary tried to explain that this site is not suitable for a sit-in, his response was that it is also his

prerogative to sit wherever he wants," he said.

Hours later, the police moved in to detain the Opposition leaders and took them away in buses.

The AAP, however, targeted the Congress, claiming that its dharna was an attempt to divert attention from the Cockroach Janta Party's protest. AAP MP Sanjay Singh said, "To weaken BJP's dharna, Modi ji has allowed Rahul Gandhi to protest outside his residence."

Following the massive assembly of youth in the heart of the Capital Monday, the sense in Congress was that it could not allow a public perception that the BJP was spearheading the movement against paper leaks and examination irregularities, especially since Gandhi had been raising the same set of issues for a while and had held two public engagements — in Kota in June and Dehradun last week.

In a way, Congress was out to reclaim the space, especially since Monday's protests reflected the anger among a section of the youth. And that too when most of the non-Congress Opposition had rallied behind activist Sonam Wangchuk and the CJP.

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, AAP's Arvind Kejriwal and Shiv Sena UBT's Uddhav Thackeray were among Opposition leaders who visited Jantar Mantar protest venue Tuesday.

Govt signal

record. The government is not running away from it," a senior government functionary said.

The government's argument is that the focus should now be on ensuring a smooth academic session rather than reopening a controversy it considers administratively settled.

Officials cited the progress on NEET, CUET and JEE Main admissions. "The majority of students have gone back to campuses," the functionary

said, adding that Delhi University's admission of around 72,000 students is an indicator that academic activity has resumed.

The Centre's assessment is that those continuing to lead the protests are no longer the "primary stakeholders" affected by the examination process. "We are not saying people should not protest. In a democracy, people have every right to protest," another senior functionary said. "But who is raising the issue, how it is being raised and who is behind it are different questions."

That distinction also underpins the government's refusal to entertain demands that the Education Minister step down. Asked whether the minister should offer to resign on moral grounds after two paper leak controversies during his tenure, a senior functionary, privy to the government's deliberations, repeatedly described the demand as "a political question".

"It is a political question," he said, declining to answer directly. "Should we succumb to political pressure?" he asked, arguing that the government had already accepted responsibility

and taken corrective measures.

"The system was compromised by people we trusted. We are not the paper mafia. We were let down by people within the system we trusted. We did not hide the leak. We accepted responsibility and tried to fix it," he said.

Even as it refuses to concede the demand for resignation, the government says it is not opposed to a discussion in Parliament. "There should be debate. There should be dialogue in the House. The government is fully prepared to answer every question," the official said.

Sikkim

Superintendent of Police (SP) Sonam D Bhutia said. The SP added that bodies of 12 have been recovered during the rescue and search operations being carried out by multiple agencies.

The ongoing rescue operation involved the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the Fire and Emergency Services, and other agencies.

The NHPC said in a statement that the incident was caused by the "sudden explosion of trapped/embedded suspected methane gas within the rocks, resulting in dense smoke and toxic gases". The statement said that immediately after the incident, "the project team activated its emergency response protocols", and that they were working in close coordination with the district administration, NDRF, SDRF, local authorities and other emergency agencies. "In addition, a special rescue team from DG Mines-Safety has also reached the site for rescue operations," it said.

The tunnel, which is part of the hydroelectric project, was being constructed to transport high-pressure water from the reservoir directly to the powerhouse, which has the turbines and generators.

Police sources said that during the ongoing excavation work

for the tunnel, workers are likely to have inadvertently hit pockets of trapped methane gas within the rock layers. The escaping gas would then build up rapidly inside the enclosed tunnel and ignite, causing an explosion. This then likely led to a cave-in, the sources said.

Sikkim Governor Om Prakash MATHUR and Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang visited the site to review rescue operations.

Tamang announced Rs 4 lakh ex gratia for the family members of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for injured persons. In a social media post, he said he was closely monitoring the rescue operations and had directed all concerned authorities to extend every possible assistance, expedite the rescue efforts, and ensure that the highest standards of safety are strictly followed throughout the operation.

PM Narendra Modi announced ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each to the kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 each to the injured.

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenud Adhikari also expressed concern over the incident. "We are closely monitoring the developments as there is a strong possibility that some of the affected workers belong to our Jalpaiguri district," he said in a social media post. He said West Bengal minister Bishal Lama and the District Magistrate of Darjeeling "are personally rushing to the site of the incident".

—WITH PTI INPUT

Envoy

authorities that the targeting of commercial shipping and the resulting loss of innocent civilian lives are unacceptable and must be avoided," it said.

While India was quick to condemn the attack on Monday, it did not name Russia. The naming, and summoning, of a Russian diplomat on Tuesday is significant, considering Delhi is perceived to be closer to Moscow and has done the diplomatic tightrope walk over the last four years of the Russia-Ukraine war.

While there have been deaths of Indian seafarers in the US-Iran war in the last four-and-a-half months, this is the first time that Indian sailors have died in the Russia-Ukraine war.

According to the Ukrainian Air Force, Russian forces launched three cruise missiles, one of which struck *Golden Leo* — a Turkish-owned merchant vessel sailing under the flag of Guinea-Bissau — while it was departing Ukraine's Odesa port Sunday. The strike killed 10 people, including four Indians. The MEA had said another Indian sailor was "hospitalised in a critical condition".

While the Centre is yet to release the names of the dead, two sailors have been identified by their families as Akhil Joyan, 26, of Kerala's Kasaragod district, and Abhishek Nishad, 22, of Deoria in Uttar Pradesh.

Caste count in Census

The caste enumeration will happen along with the population enumeration phase of the Census, which will start early next year.

The 2011 SECC failed to produce usable caste data largely because of poor data quality, the absence of a standardized caste registry and flaws in operational design. Since respondents could self-report caste names without verification, the exercise generated an administrative nightmare. The final dataset contained nearly 46.7 lakh distinct caste names, compared with the 4,147 castes recorded in the last comprehensive caste census conducted back in 1931.

The Union government eventually withheld the raw caste data.

As per the drop-down menu proposal under consideration, Central and state caste lists would be combined, with many states maintaining their own lists of OBC and other castes that differ from the Central list.

At present, the Census captures castes only for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The Census enumeration application already contains a drop-down menu for notified SC and ST communities, while all others are recorded simply as 'Others'.

As per this proposal, there would be a separate OBC cat-

The injured

march to Parliament made their way back to the protest site at Jantar Mantar on Tuesday. Some walked with a limp, others with fresh bandages, while volunteers guided them towards a smaller stage that had been turned into a makeshift relief area.

Ajit Singh, 30, a teacher who coaches B.Ed students and lives in Paschim Vihar, said he headed back to the protest site from Lady Hardinge Hospital at 11 am. "I had been fasting for two-three days before joining the march," he said.

Singh said he was walking on Parliament Street when the police moved in. "We told them we hadn't eaten and couldn't run. We asked them to spare us. But I was hit with a lathi first on my head, then my hands. I saw my friend Hammad being kicked by a man in plain clothes carrying a lathi. He collapsed," he said.

Tear gas left him unable to see clearly for nearly six hours, Singh said. He was treated for injuries to his head, left hand and legs in the orthopaedics wing of Lady Hardinge Hospital. "I joined the protest because I am a teacher, and I have to show my face to my students. The injustice done to them is intolerable," he said.

Despite leaving the hospital only hours earlier, Singh said he felt compelled to return. "Although the government is unresponsive, we shall continue to fight for the students," he said.

Singh's friend Hammad (30) was back at Jantar Mantar by 3 pm — just nine hours after the social worker from Tonk in Rajasthan had walked out of Lady Hardinge Hospital, where he had spent the night after being injured on his head and hand.

"I want the police officers who hit women protesters to be detained... I am weak in body but not in resolve," said Hammad, an LLB dropout who says he spent the past 23 days at the protest site.

Recalling the crackdown, Hammad said he had been sitting on the kerb with around 25 protesters near the Parliament

Street police station barricades. "There were five men in uniform and about 10 in civilian clothes. They started hitting me with lathi. I fell to the ground. 'Get up from here,' they told me," he said.

A few friends carried him to a nearby medical camp, but he got caught up in the lathi charge when police began clearing the area, he said. "I fell unconscious for about half-an-hour after they brought me to the tent. Later, I lay outside the police booth near Jantar Mantar for nearly two hours before they took me to the hospital," he said.

Sitting in front of the stage at Jantar Mantar, 25-year-old Ritik Ghosle's right foot still bore scars of the previous day's police action. The clothing shop owner from Pune said he flew to Delhi to join the protest three days ago and went to RML Hospital after being injured on Monday.

"I studied only till Class 10, but I want the children of our country to have a better future than me," he said, adding that he returned to the protest site because he "didn't want to leave the movement halfway".

Nearby sat John (18), a student with a bandage around his head after being struck with a lathi while leaving Jantar Mantar on Monday. "If I don't fight today, I have no other option but to study abroad," he said.

Narendra (22), who works at a general store in Haryana, suffered injuries on the back of his knee and hands in the lathi charge. He was discharged from Lady Hardinge Hospital at 9 am and came directly to Jantar Mantar "because of the suicides (related to paper leaks) and for our future generations," he said.

Karan, a graduate from Rajasthan, said he had been discharged from Lady Hardinge Hospital in the morning. Unemployed for the past three years, the 24-year-old said he had attempted the Delhi Police and Rajasthan Police constable recruitment exams without success. He said he joined the protest because he was "fed up with the paper leaks". He said he needs to get back home to prepare for "another recruitment exam next week". "But I will take part in the protest here tomorrow, too,"

PM

government acted immediately after reports of the paper leak surfaced, and 13 people were arrested and sent to jail. At the same time, to ensure that the future of the students was not affected, the NEET re-examination was given priority, conducted successfully, and the results were declared without delay," he said.

"The Prime Minister also said strict steps have been taken to prevent such paper leaks in future. Those found involved in the paper leak racket have been arrested and jailed. He appealed that they should be given the strictest possible punishment, with the support of the country's top lawyers, so that those involved in such a grave offence face exemplary action and such incidents do not recur," he said.

According to Rijiju, Modi said that to ensure that no future paper leaks take place, all states and the Centre must join hands irrespective of party. "He said this is a matter of the nation... not partisan politics since it concerns the future of the youth," he said.

At the meeting, sources said, Modi pointed out that while the paper leak incident inconvenienced students, the re-examination took place without delay.

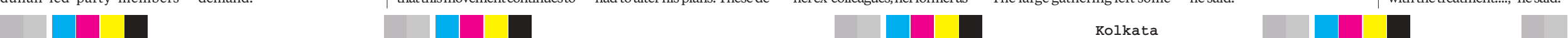
They quoted him saying "dhirandhar" lawyers must ensure "exemplary punishment" for those behind the paper leak so that students get justice. He urged NDA MPs to reach out to students since it was "easy to misguide them, difficult to show them the right path".

The Prime Minister, sources said, praised Skyroot Aerospace's successful rocket launch, describing it as an example of the brilliance of young entrepreneurs and their startups.

Taking a swipe at Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi without naming him, Modi was quoted as having said "imagine what would be their contribution at the age of 56 years, unlike many others we see around us".

On Monday, police used tear gas and lathis to stop thousands of protesters marching towards Parliament on the first day of the monsoon session. Many protesters were injured.

On Tuesday, Union Health Minister J P Nadra visited Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and Lady Hardinge Hospital and met some of the injured protesters. "I met Shikesh Irshad who was injured and is under treatment at Lady Hardinge Hospital. He said he is satisfied with the treatment....," he said.



SLAMS PREVIOUS TMC, CPI(M) GOVTs OVER Rs 8 LAKH-CRORE DEBT

E-bus, water metro: CM's slew of announcements to make commute easy



A driver waves from an electric bus; Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari at the flag-off event in Kolkata on Tuesday. ANI, EXPRESS



Suwendu flags off 50 eco-friendly buses; Rs 400-cr set aside for 'zero value ticket' scheme for women

Sweetie Kumari
Kolkata, July 21

CHIEF MINISTER Suwendu Adhikari on Tuesday announced a slew of measures aimed at modernising the state's transport sector, even as he blamed the previous regimes for the mounting debt on the state's economy.

The announcement came as the CM flagged-off 50 new air-conditioned buses — 43 CNG and seven electric — buses at the Transport Bhawan in Kolkata. Adhikari also announced plans to introduce a Water Metro in Kolkata, expand Metro Rail connectivity beyond the city, set up charging points for electric buses and develop a greenfield airport in Kalyani.

Thanking officials from WBTC, NBSTC, and SBSTC, alongside Chief Secretary Manoj Agarwal and Transport Secre-

tary Ravinder Singh, the Chief Minister said at the event: "A state and its government can only be dynamic when its communication and transport system is modern, eco-friendly, and punctual. The more transport networks expand, the more industry and commerce will grow in the state, generating employment opportunities."

Slamming the previous governments, Adhikari said: "We have to steer the state forward while handling the burden of Rs 8 lakh crore debt left behind by the CPIM and Trinamool governments. Working through increased coordination with the Central Government rather than engaging in fights and disputes will benefit the state in terms of both revenue and infrastructure." Adhikari added that the government planned on further increasing the state's electronic bus fleet, and the funding for which will be available from the Union Ministry of Urban Affairs at a 60:40 ratio.

The newly launched fleet features a distinctive saffron colour scheme, paying homage to Swami Vivekananda and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Besides, charging points and refueling in-

frastructure will be set up at depots across all major districts.

Meanwhile, tenders are being floated immediately for 400 new eco-friendly buses in the state, building toward a target of 1,000 CNG and electric buses by March 2027.

The government is also coming up with 'pink cards' for women commuters, alongside the promised 'zero value ticket' scheme for women. The state has earmarked roughly Rs 400 crore annually for this initiative. Addressing long-standing administrative grievances, the conductors' salaries will be brought at parity with drivers from August.

While the existing Kolkata Metro network remains under the Ministry of Railways with state assistance, the state government is planning to launch independent city metros, connecting Asansol-Durgapur and Siliguri-Jalpaiguri. The Chief Secretary has been tasked with securing financial backing from multilateral development banks, targeting project completion within 2-3 years.

Further, to decongest city bottlenecks and boost eco-tourism, the government is joining the national 'Water Metro' net-

work to utilise the state's extensive river network.

A new roll-on/roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry service between Garden Reach (Kolkata) and Sankrail-Shivpur (Howrah) has also been announced to carry freight trucks across the Hooghly River. Upgraded jetty infrastructure and luxury passenger boat services with integrated hospitality will also be introduced to boost travel to the Sundarbans.

A special plan has also been launched to preserve Kolkata's iconic trams to be run on scenic and heritage routes.

He also announced a greenfield international airport to be built on 2,000-acre land in Kalyani, North 24 Parganas district. With central assistance under the UDAN scheme, regional airports at Balurghat, Malda and Purulia are also acquiring land for runway expansions to prepare for commercial operations. Meanwhile, body cameras will soon be made mandatory for motor vehicle inspectors, along with installation of real-time CCTV monitoring rooms across public vehicles department offices to eliminate extortion and broker networks.

Not against pvt role, will ensure education not commodified: Minister

Press Trust of India
Kolkata, July 21

STATE HIGHER Education Minister Jagannath Chattopadhyay on Tuesday told the Assembly that the state government was not against private participation in education but will ensure that education is not turned into a commodity.

He said the state government was trying to secure for West Bengal one of the five university townships announced by the Centre.

Presenting a budgetary outlay of Rs 7,168 crore for 2026-27 for the state's Higher Education department, Chattopadhyay said the government will try to rope in well-known universities from other parts of the country and foreign colleges to set up facilities in Bengal.

It will help students looking for admissions in reputed universities in other parts of India and abroad get better education opportunities in the state itself, the minister said.

He said while the government was not against private participation in education, "it will ensure that education is not turned into a commodity in the state".

A scholarship in the name of Swami Vivekananda will soon be announced for meritorious students going abroad for higher education, he said, adding that the government will give girl students Rs 50,000 in instalments for them to complete their higher education. He said Bengal did not join 76 central higher education schemes during the previous dispensation only because they had 'PM' at the beginning of the name. Under the BJP government, the state has joined all these schemes, Chattopadhyay said.

Participating in a discussion in the House on the budget proposal for the department, CPI(M) MLA Md Mostafizur Rahaman said the number of colleges and universities increased in the state during the TMC rule, giving an impression that higher education in the state was reaching newer heights, but the real picture was dismal.



Higher Education minister Jagannath Chattopadhyay

Maintaining that politicisation of college management during the previous TMC government severely affected the higher education system in West Bengal, the CPI(M) MLA urged the higher education minister to rectify these issues.

Unregulated fee hike in mushrooming private colleges in the state over the last 15 years must be checked to provide students with affordable education, he said and sought proper utilisation of the budget outlay for the school and higher education departments.

BJP MLA Samarendra Nath Ghosh said the budget proposals aim to regain West Bengal's lost glory in education and congratulated the higher education department for proposing to set up six women's colleges in the state.

He said one college should be set up in each district to proliferate women's education.

Jamuria MLA Bijan Kumar Mukherjee said although much is said regarding the welfare of the Adivasis, they are lagging in higher education. Setting up a board to spread higher education among the Adivasi people in the state would help achieve the goal of imparting education to all, he said.

Chattopadhyay maintained the BJP government "inherited a rotten higher education system" in West Bengal.

Stating that 31 state-aided universities were set up during the Mamata Banerjee government, he said that in reality most were without even basic infrastructure or teachers and only a minuscule number of students.

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HC grants relief to Mahua in hate speech case

Press Trust of India
Kolkata, July 21

THE CALCUTTA High Court on Tuesday granted interim protection from coercive action to TMC MP Mahua Moitra till October 5 in a "hate speech" case which she claimed is based on fabricated charges.

The Krishnanagar MP prayed before the court for an

interim order preventing coercive police action in the case and quashing of proceedings against her in the case registered at Hogolberia police station in Nadia district.

Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya directed Moitra to appear before the investigating officer on August 14 for questioning in the case.

The court directed that no

coercive steps be taken against her till October 5 subject to compliance with the conditions alluded to until October or until further order, whichever is earlier.

Noting that the BNS (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) provisions applied to Moitra carry a maximum punishment below seven years, the court observed that she is entitled to protection

from coercive action provided she cooperates with the investigation.

On a prayer by her lawyer, Justice Bhattacharyya directed the police to ensure Moitra is not subjected to egg-pelting when she appears before the investigating agency.

The court directed that the matter will be heard again on October 1.



सत्यमेव जयते
Government of West Bengal



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**Ministry of Culture Government of India**

Information & Cultural Affairs Department
Government of West Bengal

Through
Gyan Bharatam Mission
of Government of India

An initiative is being taken to preserve the centuries-old manuscripts and handwritten manuscripts spread across the country in modern method. The ancient handwritten manuscripts, will be uploaded on the portal of 'Gyan Bharatam Mission' after being properly identified. If any government/private organization or any individual has such ancient manuscripts in their collection, they are requested to get in touch with the following government offices.

* District Magistrate's office

* Local BDO office

* Office of the District & Sub-Divisional Information and Cultural Officer

**Contact in Kolkata - Directorate of Archaeology and Museums
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MARTYRS' DAY: 23 YEARS AFTER 13 YOUTH CONGRESS WORKERS WERE KILLED IN POLICE FIRING

One occasion, three claimants for its legacy



TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee with Abhishek at their faction's rally near Birla Planetarium; rebel MLAs Ritabrata Banerjee, Madan Mitra, Firhad Hakim at a separate rally organised by the breakaway bloc, at Mayo Road, in Kolkata, Tuesday. PARTHA PAUL, EXPRESS



Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury at the rally. PTI

Cong sees hope in TMC splinter, plans Brigade rally with Rahul

Press Trust of India
Kolkata, July 21

THE STATE Congress on Tuesday held its Martyrs' Day programme here after several years, commemorating the youth wing workers killed in the 1993 police firing, and said the attendance at the gathering marked the party's revival in the state.

It also announced organising a rally at the Brigade Parade Ground in central Kolkata next year that would be addressed by the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi.

After Mamata Banerjee disassociated from the Congress and formed the TMC in the late 1990s, her party gradually took over the Martyrs' Day event, holding massive rallies at Dharmatala every year.

With the TMC suffering a rift after losing Assembly polls this year, the observance was quite lacklustre this year, with the Mamata Banerjee faction and the rebel group holding separate programmes.

The Congress took the opportunity to organise its own programme at the iconic Shaheed Minar in central Kolkata.

The programme, however, brought to the fore murmurs of factionalism within the Congress' state unit, as a section of workers raised slogans in support of state Congress chief Subhankar Sarkar when his predecessor Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury arrived at the venue. Chowdhury, sought to downplay the development and praised Sarkar for the turnout at the rally.

Asserting that this was only a trailer, he said, "Change is inevitable, and it will be evident in the next Lok Sabha elections."

Addressing the gathering, Sarkar alleged that 11 Congress workers were injured while on their way to the programme and have been admitted to the R G Kar Hospital.

Announcing a series of organisational programmes over the next few months, he said, "We will organise street-corner meetings from August 9 to August 14 and hoist the national flag on the midnight of Independence Day." The state Congress chief also announced that the party would hold a rally at Brigade Parade Ground between January 15 and February 15 next year. "Rahul Gandhi will attend the rally," he said.

National Youth Congress leader Uday Bhanu Chib launched a diatribe against the BJP, alleging that the rebel TMC faction was being controlled by the saffron party.

From a scaled-down event, Mamata ups ante against BJP, rebels, seeks Opp unity

Day after Delhi crackdown on students' protest, she says with CJP

Ravik Bhattacharya & Atri Mitra
Kolkata, July 21

REFERRING TO the police crackdown on student protesters in New Delhi, Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday drew a similarity with violence against her party workers after their defeat in the West Bengal Assembly polls, and accused the BJP governments at the Centre and the state of trying to "silence" the dissenting voice with "threats".

Addressing party workers during the annual Martyrs' Day rally in Kolkata, the former chief minister said, "People, from Delhi to Kolkata, have witnessed what happens when fear and intimidation become political tools. If they cannot win through democratic means, they try to silence voices through threats. But I ask them, how long can fear be used as a weapon? How many people can they continue to intimidate? Our leaders and workers have faced repeated harassment across different parts of the state."

Asserting that if required, she would go to Delhi to take part in the protest led by the Cockroach Janata Party against paper leak, the TMC chief said her party has been supporting the students' protest from the beginning.

"Running a government requires discipline and adherence to democratic norms. Recent events in Delhi have shown how quickly situations can escalate during political confrontations. I have heard reports from Parliament that the circumstances became so tense that even the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) had to alter his

plans. These developments remind us that stability and democratic conduct must always be protected. I want to make one thing clear. If injustice and intimidation continue, our movement will remain on the streets," the TMC chief said, adding, "Like the BJP ran away in Delhi, from here too they all will run away if we all hit the streets".

The July 21 Martyrs' Day rally, held every year by the TMC to mark the death of 13 Youth Congress members in police firing in 1993 when Left Front was in power, was a lacklustre affair this year, with the rebel faction of the party holding a parallel event. For the first time in 15 years, the TMC rally was held, not in its traditional spot in Esplanade, but near Birla Planetarium on the orders of the Calcutta High Court. The rebel faction, led by MLA Ritabrata Banerjee, held its parallel Martyrs' Day event at Mayo Road.

To CM: 'If I speak, you will be exposed'

At the rally, Mamata also reached out to all the Opposition parties, calling for a united front against the BJP under the INDIA bloc. "On Rabindra Jayanti, I had made it clear that I have no personal ego or bitterness towards anyone. Across India, we fight together as part of the INDIA alliance, and we do the same in Bengal. My priority has never been personal rivalry; it has always been the protection of democracy and constitutional values," she said.

"I appeal to all those fighting the BJP in Bengal to come together," she said without mentioning any party's name.

Referring to her rebel MLAs and MPs joining hands with the BJP, Mamata said, "I want to caution those who believe they are safe simply because they can hold meetings or operate party offices today under political patronage. If democratic institutions continue to weaken, the consequences will not stop with

Abhishek sends legal notice to Madan Mitra

Kolkata: TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee sent a Rs 10 crore legal notice to rebel MLA Madan Mitra, claiming that the latter made defamatory statements against him in a social media post. The notice by Banerjee's lawyer claimed the compensation to Banerjee by Mitra "for the loss of his personal reputation, political standing, credibility and goodwill." The notice claimed that Mitra made "malicious" comments against Banerjee in a live broadcast, making fabricated insinuations. The notice demanded that the compensation be paid within three days, along with the issuance of a public apology. PTI

one political party. I do not want democracy to be destroyed or undermined," she said.

She also accused Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, her aide-turned-rival, of using the state machinery to weaken the TMC. Without naming Adhikari, who switched over to the BJP in 2020, the TMC supremo said she could expose his deeds during his decade-long stay in her party. "If I open my mouth, I will reveal everything about what you did during your 10 years in the Trinamool. I will expose your mask... If BJP is defeated at Centre, government here will be on shaky ground," she said.

To 'traitors': 'Your mask will come off'

Declaring that "traitors" (the rebel leaders) would never be taken back, the TMC chief said, "I want to tell those who have spent years in the Trinamool Congress and later changed their stance that, one day, every mask will come off. The truth cannot remain hidden forever. People will ultimately recognise who stood with them during difficult times and who chose a different path when pressure

mounted."

"Many have left because of fear—the fear of ED (Enforcement Directorate, CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation), or CID (Criminal Investigation Department). I have never seen the CID so active in my political life. Through different levels of the administration, thousands of cases have been filed against our leaders and workers. Around 40,000 cases have been registered against our party workers. It is almost unprecedented in scale," she claimed.

Cautioning the rebel leaders of the "consequence" of their act, Mamata said she would fight "till the very end" to retain her party and symbol.

The rebel faction, which claims to be the "real TMC", has moved the Election Commission to get the TMC symbol and party name, and has gotten the party account frozen.

"If you think that because you are in government, you can take away my party's symbol, I will never accept it. I will fight until the very end. This party and its symbol were built through immense sacrifice and the blood of countless workers. As the founder-president of the party, I say that no one can legally take away our symbol. If anyone attempts to do so, I will fight to reclaim everything. What people have built from their hearts becomes symbol of party, its greatest asset, and its enduring legacy," said Mamata.

Guards venue after stage 'vandalised'

On the eve of the rally, Mamata and her loyal leaders spent Monday night in front of the Birla Planetarium after the dais was vandalised. The stage was rebuilt by Tuesday morning.

On Monday evening, Mamata visited the venue and alleged that the party was being prevented from holding meetings and processions. She also claimed that people travelling to attend Tuesday's Kolkata rally

were not being provided accommodation. Later that night, the stage was allegedly vandalised, with banners and hoardings strewn on the road and a part of the pandal destroyed. As reports of the vandalism spread, Banerjee and TMC leaders Dola Sen, Derek O'Brien, and others rushed back to the site. Banerjee said the group would remain there through the night to ensure no further disturbance to the ceremony.

"Our supporters are being prevented from coming to the meeting. The police are threatening the families of the martyrs not to come to the meeting. Everything cannot be done by force like this. We are remembering the martyrs. Our stage is being broken. The electricity and microphone lines were disconnected. Posters and banners are being torn. Around 60 BJP-backed goons did all these. It is led by a criminal, who is currently out on bail. There has been a conspiracy since the beginning to sabotage the event with police on one side and BJP on other side," Mamata alleged.

Around 1.30 am, in a Facebook Live from the area, Trinamool MP Mahua Moitra said that someone had tried to sabotage the Mamata Banerjee-led faction's Martyrs' Day programme. "We will not bow down to this. The stage has been set up again as before. Martyrs' Day will be observed. Party workers and supporters should join without any worry," she added.

On Tuesday morning, Mamata paid tribute to the martyrs in a post on X. "On #ShahidDibas, I pay my heartfelt tributes to the martyrs who tragically lost their lives in 1993. May this day strengthen the resolve of every member of the Maa-Mati-Manush family to uphold democracy, justice, and the rights of the people. Their sacrifice continues to inspire us, and their legacy will forever remain at the heart of our movement," she said.

'Leave Abhishek's hands, we will all fall at your feet': Madan Mitra dares Mamata

Tanusree Bose
Kolkata, July 21

UPPING THE ante against TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, rebel MLA Madan Mitra gave her a one-month ultimatum to "leave Abhishek Banerjee's hands" and reconnect with the grassroot workers. He also dared Abhishek to admit his share of mistakes, which, Mitra said, allowed the party to splinter.

Mitra's remarks came days after Abhishek challenged the rebel faction leaders to return to Mamata-fold, saying he would quit all party posts in an hour if they did.

Addressing a Martyrs' Day rally organised by Leader of Opposition Ritabrata Banerjee at Mayo Road, Mitra said, "I am giving Mamata Banerjee one month. Leave Abhishek's hand and hold the hands of the TMC workers. The TMC is not Abhishek's party. It belongs to the workers. Who is responsible for this three-way split in the party? You weren't made chief minister by Abhishek or film celebrities whom you adore, but by the lakhs of Trinamool workers who toiled for you."

"If you (Mamata) have the courage, come to this stage and apologise. We will fall at your feet," Mitra said.

Taking potshots at Abhishek, Mitra said, "You spoke of resigning within an hour of the rebels returning to Mamata. I am giving you two hours to walk here and admit that you made mistakes. No one will throw eggs at you. Admit that the party has gone down because of you."

Meanwhile, Ritabrata attacked Mamata, accusing the previous chief minister of suppressing the judicial probe report on the 1993 July 21 police firing, and alleging that her government stood on the "blood of those martyrs".



Rebel MLA Madan Mitra addresses the rally. PTI

"Several questions have arisen after the report was made public. The investigation happened but the report was suppressed. The report said the commission had stated to give Rs 25 lakh to the martyrs' families and injured Rs 5 lakh but that was not done. We want to know who did Didi have to save so that the report was not made public? Where did the money go?" he said.

He also alleged that cars and buses from several districts like Birbhum, Maheshtala, Krishnanagar, and Metiaburuz were being stopped and BJP workers were attacking the TMC workers, saying he would file police complaints.

Ritabrata announced monthly financial assistance for the families of the martyrs, provided the EC gave the rebels control over the party's assets. "I can promise you that if the Commission gives a decision in our favour, then the first thing we will do is this: Rs 10,000 will reach the accounts of all the July 21 martyr families every month from the TMC's funds," he said.

Present on the stage at the gathering were leaders like Firhad Hakim, Aroop Biswas, Chandrima Bhattacharya, Snehasish Chakraborty, Shyuli Saha, Arup Chakraborty, and Anubrata Mondal.

● GROUND REPORT

'Ekushe July amader ekta emotion... Can't imagine the day without her (Mamata)'

Besides the leaders, change was reflected in arrangements too: Unlike past, no night stay or egg-rice meals for party workers

Antoreep Das
Kolkata, July 21

"EKUSHE JULY amader kachhe ekta emotion. Ar sei movement ta korechhilen Mamata Banerjee... Tanke chhara ekushe July bhabajaina (For us, July 21 is an emotion. That movement was led by Mamata Banerjee... Without her, there's no July 21.)" These were the words of Sumesh Sarkar, the vice-chairman of Basirhat Municipality, seated just 10 feet away from Mamata's stage.

As the TMC supremo emerged on the stage — with a

huge banner in the background displaying the words "Shraddhanjali" (tribute) in Bengali — the crowds erupted in cheer.

Even after a crushing defeat in the Assembly polls and the subsequent loss of her party's 20 MPs and 65 MLAs, Mamata managed to attract a sea of supporters at her Martyrs' Day rally here on Tuesday — even more than the rebel camps.

When the Mamata-led Trinamool Congress first assumed power in West Bengal in 2011, the party's July 21 rally became an annual show of political power. Packed with bigwigs

from across the industries, the TMC rally would attract eminent actors, artists and social personalities.

But this year, the former chief minister was surrounded only by her closest associates, who remain by her side as the dust settles after an intense electoral battle in the state.

Standing just behind the stage, a TMC leader, "In the last 15 years, we had forgotten how to give a true tribute to the martyrs. Those celebrities who used to gather here have now vanished. After many years, we are truly remembering our mar-



The crowd at Mamata's Martyrs Day rally, Tuesday. PARTHA PAUL

tyrs...in a gathering much much higher than the rebel bloc."

The change was also reflected in the arrangements: Unlike previous years, this time the Mamata camp had not arranged for her party workers'

night stay, or egg-rice meals.

Mamata, too, reflected upon this in her speech, "This year, I could not arrange for accommodation... Could not even arrange a bus, train or car. Even after that, you have come of your own

accord. You are my gold mine; and those who were false, they fled away. The more they will go, the happier I will be. I have my students and youths by my side, old and new workers, they will come forward. The street will show our way."

But the dearth of arrangements did not stop the party loyalists from showing up for Mamata at the Birla Planetarium. Several of them hoped she would bounce back from the defeat even stronger.

For some party workers, Mamata's defeat has left them feeling politically sidelined.

Mahmud Alam, a resident of Pilkhana in North Howrah, said, "We are here as we stand with Didi. For us, she represents Bengal's pride, and we won't leave her. She has worked

for people across communities — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, everyone. Bengal's culture is about living together and respecting each other's festivals, not bulldozer politics."

For many party workers, the day also serves as an annual reminder of the party's priorities. "We come here every year because from this stage, Didi shares the direction for the future of the party... We go back and continue our work," said Bidyut Sardar from the Jagatballavpur constituency.

To some, travelling long distances to attend the annual rally is a mark of their commitment to the party. "Mamata's name is deeply rooted in people's hearts, and whenever she calls, thousands turn up. We came from Durgapur, spending our own

money to attend because we wanted to support her. Even today, many more would have come, but some were prevented from travelling. The turnout reflects people's affection for Didi, not planning or inducement," said Prashanta Chowdhury, who works at a steel factory in Durgapur. Many supporters also seemed visibly angry at the rebel TMC faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee, with some calling him a "traitor". As crowds spilled across key intersections near the venue, traffic movement slowed down as police and volunteers managed the movement. Beyond speeches and slogans, the rally came alive with street vendors and hawkers, seeming like a 'mela'.

— ANTOREEP DAS IS AN INTERN AT KOLKATA OFFICE OF THE INDIAN EXPRESS



KISAN MAHAPANCHAYAT AGAINST INDIA-US TRADE DEAL

Punjab farmers stopped on way to Delhi as Haryana cops seal Shambhu border

Express News Service
Chandigarh, July 21

PUNJAB FARMERS on their way to Delhi for the Kisan Mahapanchayat to protest against the proposed India-US trade deal were stopped at the Shambhu border by the Haryana Police on Tuesday.

The farmers' convoys were met with barricades and cement blocks at the entry point to the neighbouring state.

Later in the day, the farmers began their march homewards after handing over a memorandum to Haryana Agriculture Minister Shyam Singh Rana and Ambala Deputy Commissioner Ajay Singh Tomer, who promised to fulfil their demands, including release of detained farmers.

The leaders said they ended their agitation around 6 pm after their detained colleagues were released. By the evening, Haryana authorities had begun removing barricades and cement blocks from the Shambhu border point. They said traffic on the Ambala-Amritsar national highway will resume soon. A day-long Kisan Mahapanchayat was to happen at Kisan Ghat in Delhi under the banner of 'Desh Bachao Morcha' on Tuesday.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann slammed the Haryana government for preventing farmers from moving towards Delhi and asked the Centre to invite farmers for



Protesting farmers at Shambhu toll plaza near Patiala on Tuesday. EXPRESS

talks. Besides Punjab, farmers from Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh were claimed to have been part of the march for the Mahapanchayat.

Earlier in the day, around a thousand farmers from Punjab, carrying flags of their outfits, arrived at the Shambhu border to proceed to Delhi on buses.

According to farmer leaders, scores of farmers were stopped by the police at the Khanauri border, Shahabad in Kurukshetra, and Karnal while

they were on their way to Delhi. Thus hundreds of farmers sat on a dharna on the expressway at around 10 am and remained there until 5.30 pm, upon the release of the detained farmer leaders.

National Highway-44, which connects Delhi with Punjab, and the Jammu-Katra National Highway were among the worst affected due to the protests, especially in Ambala and Kaithal districts. However, the main centre of the farmers' movement in Haryana remained the Shambhu border

in Ambala, where thousands of farmers from Punjab had gathered to proceed towards Delhi. Authorities in Ambala also imposed prohibitory orders across the district.

A senior Haryana Police officer told *The Indian Express* that around 15 companies of security forces, including paramilitary personnel, had been deployed at the Shambhu border. To prevent the movement of protesters, the police erected multiple barricades and placed cement blocks on the bridge over the Ghaggar

River at Shambhu. Alternative traffic arrangements were also made for commuters travelling between Haryana and Punjab.

BKU (Bhagat Singh) spokesperson Tejveer Singh said that the Haryana minister assured the farmers that those detained, including farmer leader Gurnam Singh Charuni, would be released after discussions with the Chief Minister and the farmers were also assured that a meeting with Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan would be arranged within the next 8-10 days.

Jaishankar to meet Quad counterparts in Manila on sidelines of ASEAN meet

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, July 21

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar will visit Manila, Philippines, on July 22-23 to attend the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting under the ASEAN framework, including the ASEAN-India, East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

The MEA said that the visit "underscores India's deepening engagement with ASEAN under the Act East Policy and reaffirms our strong commitment to further strengthening the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. It is of particular significance that 2026 has been designated as the ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation".

It said that on the margins of the ASEAN-related meetings, "the External Affairs Minister will be participating in a Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting with his counterparts from Australia, Japan and the United States. He is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts from participating countries."

In May this year, with an eye on China, the Quad Foreign Ministers decided to launch the Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Corporation, expanding maritime domain awareness and enhancing port infrastructure in Fiji. They also agreed to launch the Indo-Pacific Energy

E. EXPLAINED

Bridging the gap

The Quad grouping has faced challenges in the last year or so. With the US President Donald Trump reaching out to China and the strained ties between Delhi and Washington, there is a perceived gap between India and the US. But the Quad grouping meeting at the Foreign Ministers' level signals some effort to bridge the gap.

Security initiative, which will focus on regional energy resilience. And they decided to proceed with concrete cooperation under the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative framework to strengthen supply chains.

The Foreign Ministers of India, the US, Australia and Japan will meet in Manila. But with the US and China engagement on one side and the strained ties between India and the US, there appears to be uncertainty over the Quad leaders' summit this year in Delhi.

In May this year, when the

Quad Foreign Ministers met in Delhi, the joint statement did not specify whether it would be held this year in Delhi or in some other country. The Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting was originally planned to be held in Australia, but it was held in Delhi. So, officials said that it is a "nimble" grouping, and the decision to hold the leaders' summit will be taken by the Foreign ministers.

"We look forward to the convening of the Quad Leaders' Summit, the next Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and continuing our engagements that advance peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond," the joint statement had said.

The Philippines assumed the ASEAN Chairship for 2026 under the theme "Navigating Our Future, Together", focusing on regional peace and security, economic integration, digital transformation, inclusive growth and people empowerment. It comes at a time when ASEAN seeks to strengthen resilience amid global uncertainties while advancing cooperation among member states and external partners, including India.

Govt rescinds incorrect RS election results notification

New Delhi: The Union Law and Justice Ministry on Monday rescinded a gazette notification published earlier in the day that mistakenly renotified the results of the by-elections to three West Bengal Rajya Sabha seats instead of the result of the election to a seat from Mizoram, government and Election Commission sources said on Tuesday.

They published the correct one, notifying the election of Zoram People's Movement leader Khiamte Lalituangkima to a seat from Mizoram. ENS

Sena (UBT) moves Supreme Court against MPs' merger

Express News Service
New Delhi, July 21

THE SHIV Sena (UBT) on Tuesday moved the Supreme Court challenging Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's decision to recognise the merger of six of its MPs with the rival Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Senior Advocate Devadatt Kamat, appearing for the petitioner, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Arvind Ganpat Sawant, mentioned the matter before Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant, who was presiding over a

three-judge bench, and sought an urgent hearing.

"Six of these MPs decide unilaterally, without the merger of the original political party, and say we have merged with the rival. We contested against that political party," Kamat submitted.

The senior counsel urged the bench to hear the matter soon, saying, "The urgency is that my functioning as a political party in Parliament has come to an absolute standstill. These MPs are not with me because the Speaker has recognised their merger with some

other political party. This is intended for Parliament session." The CJI said that he could not promise it would be listed this week.

Sawant's writ petition challenges "the ex-facie unconstitutional, illegal, and perverse circular dated 18.07.2026... issued by the Joint Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat..." recognising the merger. Sampat said these MPs were given tickets by the Shiv Sena (UBT) and contested the Lok Sabha elections on the name and symbol belonging to party (flaming torch or mashaal).

Minor raped in UP hotel; 3 held

Aligarh: A 15-year-old girl was allegedly raped at a local hotel here after being lured onto the premises under a false pretext, following which police arrested the main accused and two hotel staff members, officials said on

Tuesday. Local Circle Officer said the accused, along with two staff members of the hotel, have been arrested. They have been booked under relevant provisions of the POCSO Act, the officer added. PTI



केन्द्रीय भंडारण निगम
(एक नवस्त्र सीपीएसई)
CENTRAL WAREHOUSING CORPORATION
(A NAVRATNA CPSE)

No. CWC/B&C/ED/7(1) (d)/2026-27

Dated: 20.07.2026

CANCELLATION OF ELECTION

It is to inform that Shri Manish Sahani of The Uttar Pradesh State Cooperative Bank Ltd., Lucknow is elected unopposed as Director on the Board of Central Warehousing Corporation representing 'Other Scheduled Banks' under section 7(1) (d) of the Warehousing Corporations Act, 1962 for a period of three years w.e.f. 05.08.2026 to 04.08.2029 As such the election meeting scheduled to be held on 05.08.2026 has been cancelled.

Secretary, CWC

Format C-1

(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgement dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of candidate : **SUKHENDU SEKHAR RAY**
1/111/1, Gariahat Road(South), Jodhpur Park, Kolkata-700068

Name of political party : **BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP).**
(Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)

Name of Election : **COUNCIL OF STATES (RAJYA SABHA)
BYE ELECTION 2026**

*Name of Constituency : **RAJYA SABHA, West Bengal**

I, **Sukhendu Sekhar Ray** (name of candidate), a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending criminal cases				
Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and Dated	Status of Case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1.	CJM, Alipore	Complaint Case No.1573 of 2011	Charges have not been framed	Nature of offences : DEFAMATION

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences

Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed
1.	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

Format C-1

(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgement dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of candidate : **PRAKASH CHIK BARAIK**
Vill- Newlands T.G, PO- Newlands, Dist- Alipurduar, PS- Kumargram, Pin-736205, West Bengal

Name of political party : **BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP).**
(Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)

Name of Election : **COUNCIL OF STATES (RAJYA SABHA)
BYE ELECTION 2026**

*Name of Constituency : **RAJYA SABHA, West Bengal**

I, **Prakash Chik Baraik** (name of candidate), a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending criminal cases				
Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and Dated	Status of Case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1.	CJM, Alipurduar	Kumargram Police Station Case No. 102/18, corresponding to G.R. No. 814/18	Charges have been framed	U/s 341/323/34 of IPC

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences

Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed
1.	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.



In Solidarity

A DAY after protesters taking part in ‘Sansad Chalo’ rally faced lathicharge and tear gas shelling from Delhi Police, MPs from Opposition parties streamed in to express solidarity with them at Jantar Mantar on Tuesday. From Shiv Sena (UBT)’s Sanjay Raut and Arvind Sawant to CPI(M)’s John Britas, Opposition leaders met those associated with the Cockroach Janta Party as well as the injured protesters who returned to the protest site after medical treatment.

Car Sewa

AN SUV belonging to a Congress leader was parked in a spot that served as a vantage point for anyone looking to shoot videos of the party’s protest near PM Narendra Modi’s residence on Tuesday. While initially the Congress leader didn’t let anyone lean onto his car, once the police started detaining party MPs, he gave a free pass to people who wanted to shoot videos of the police action. Some Congress workers also stood on the roof of the car and shot videos of leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, being pushed into the police buses. The onlookers left multiple dents on the SUV, but the Congress leader was unfazed and said that it was a “sacrifice for the country and the youth”.

Viral by Error

CONGRESS’S RAJYA Sabha MP Syed Naseer Hussain erroneously went viral on social media a day after the students’ protest in the Capital. The reason: Hussain’s resemblance to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Video clips of the MP standing next to senior Congress leader Renuka Chowdhury as she attacked the BJP government for the police excesses on protesting students began doing the rounds, with many mistaking Hussain for Pradhan and attacking him.

No Absentees

THE CPWD has asked its officers to avoid taking leave for the duration of the Monsoon Session of Parliament. It is learnt that officers of the level of Superintending Engineer and above have been told their presence is essential for responding to Parliament questions and references from MPs in a time-bound manner.

Washout in both Houses amid Opp uproar over paper leaks, police action

Express News Service
New Delhi, July 21

PARLIAMENT ON Tuesday witnessed another washout on the second day of the Monsoon Session as the Opposition refused to back down from its demand for a discussion on the NEET paper leak and police crackdown on protesters in Delhi; it is likely that similar disruptions will continue in the coming days, too.

Opposition leaders told The Indian Express on Tuesday evening that they will let Parliament function only after their demands are met.

A Congress MP said: “We will discuss this on Wednesday morning during the meeting of floor leaders of Opposition parties. But there is very little possibility that the House will function until the government heeds the demands of the Opposition.” MPs of other Opposition parties also agreed that they will not let Parliament run unless their demands are met.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* on Tuesday evening, Congress whip in Lok Sabha Manickam Tagore said the party has three demands from the gov-



PM Narendra Modi, Union Ministers Amit Shah and Kiren Rijiju, and BJP president Nitin Nabin after the ‘Mangal Milan’ meeting in the Parliament Library Building, in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

ernment. “One is that there should be a discussion on paper leaks and the NEET examination. The second is resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan, and third is scrapping all FIRs lodged against the protesters,” he said. “You have to understand that our leader (Rahul Gandhi) met Lok Sabha

Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday, requesting allocation of time for a discussion on the NEET issue. We got no conclusive answer. He (Rahul) then went to meet the injured students and thereafter led a protest outside the PM residence. Despite all this, the government isn’t budging,” added Tagore.

Meanwhile, the day’s proceedings on Tuesday saw multiple adjournments in both Houses.

Scant legislative business could be taken up in the Upper House with three consecutive adjournments in the face of Opposition members from across party lines raising banners and slogans in the House.

While the Lok Sabha saw two successive adjournments before its proceedings were suspended for the day, the Rajya Sabha was adjourned within a minute of Deputy Chairperson Harivansh taking the seat as Opposition leaders stood up and raised slogans. Harivansh repeatedly urged the members to take their seats but to no avail.

“If you all keep standing, keep making noise, you don’t want to allow the parliament to function,” he said, adding that whatever discussion the members wanted, they should seek permission from the Chairperson as per the House rules.

“These are the etiquettes of the House... There are some rules and regulations for discussions in Parliament; rules and regulations made by you,” he said before adjourning the

House for the day.

While the day’s scheduled papers were laid as scheduled, no further proceedings could take place with regard to the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to increase the sanctioned strength of Supreme Court judges from 34 to 38, and was tabled in the Lok Sabha by Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Monday.

In the Lower House, Opposition MPs kept raising slogans demanding a discussion on both the NEET paper leak as well as the use of tear gas shells and lathi-charge against protesters who had taken to the streets demanding Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation. Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House for the day after witnessing two repeated disruptions.

Earlier, a delegation of Opposition leaders led by Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi met Birla and put forward their demand for a discussion on the “brutality unleashed on students” and the “government’s complete lack of accountability for the examination crisis”.



Union Minister Jitendra Singh interacts with Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

Unease in BJP, allies over crackdown on protesters as govt signals outreach

Liz Mathew
New Delhi, July 21

A DAY after thousands of youths stormed central Delhi as the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led march to Parliament ran into police and security personnel, who used lathi-charge and tear gas shells to push them back, there seemed to be a disquiet among a section of the ruling BJP-led NDA over how this stir was handled, even as the government signalled on Tuesday that it was open to have further talks with the protesters.

In an outreach to agitating students, Union Health Minister J P Nadda visited the injured protesters in both the RML and Lady Hardinge hospitals where they were admitted following police crackdown.

During the Monday march, taken out by the protesters to demand the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak, Nadda held a meeting with the CJP leaders, which remained inconclusive.

On Tuesday, moments after Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi along with several senior Congress leaders, including the Rajya Sabha LoP Mallikarjun Kharge, started a sit-in outside Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s official residence on Lok Kalyan Marg to demand the PM’s resignation over police action against protesters, the government rushed Union Minister of State for PMO Jitendra Singh to talk to Rahul.

BJP insiders said the developments around the student protests, which some party leaders alleged were influenced by external forces, took an “unexpected turn” with the dispensation struggling to “contain it in time”. They also admitted that Rahul’s move took the ruling camp by surprise.

The government sent Singh along with Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan to talk to Rahul and assure him that there would be a discussion in Parliament over the NEET issue.

The Rahul-led Congress demonstration was joined by other leaders of the Opposition INDIA bloc, such as Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav and NCP(SP)’s Supriya Sule.

Later, the ruling camp tried to target Rahul. In an X post,

Singh stated, “For a senior leader like Shri Rahul Gandhi and the Leader of the Opposition to go back on his word is unfortunate and contrary to every norm of democracy. The government is ready to discuss in Parliament all issues related to NEET and the associated movement.” A BJP leader, though, said, “First time Rahul Gandhi made a political move... and we are on the back foot.”

The move to agree for a discussion also appeared to be a “climbdown”. Earlier in the day, the ministers maintained that PM Modi’s remarks at the NDA meeting, which were cited by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju before the media, was “the government’s way of communicating its position”.

Holding that the NEET leak was a “grave offence”, Modi told the NDA MPs that the government has taken immediate action against the culprits and will not allow the future of students to be compromised. Asserting that the youths could be misguided by “several gangs”, he also asked the ruling MPs to reach out and guide them.

The BJP has asked its talking heads to convey that the Congress has set a “wrong and dangerous precedent by protesting outside the PM’s residence”, which was, the party said, “not only a security threat, but such spiteful behaviour is not seen in mature democracies”.

Party leaders also stressed how youth protests in the neighbouring countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh had “created mayhem” there.

This political drama has intensified the standoff between the government and the Opposition, with the proceedings in both the Houses washed out for the second day of the Monsoon Session Tuesday. “It was a session which was expected to see the Opposition absolutely divided and the ruling NDA having a clear upper hand. But in contrast, parties like SP and NCP(SP) joined the Congress protest,” noted a BJP MP.

Several MPs from the BJP and its allies expressed their resentment over “negative optics” created by Monday’s developments. “The issue could have been handled in a better way... We have every machinery with us, still we mismanaged,” said a BJP MP.

EXPRESS special

How Modi faces his first broad-based protest ever — not one by specific interest groups

Vikas Pathak
New Delhi, July 21

WITH CROWDS sustaining at Jantar Mantar a day after the police crackdown on the Cockroach Janta Party’s Parliament march on Monday, the Narendra Modi government faces, arguably for the first time, a broad-based protest significantly different from the key ones since 2014 — farmers against the farm laws or minorities against the CAA.

On Tuesday afternoon, the Jantar Mantar protest site — having multiple barricades and large numbers of personnel from the Delhi Police and Rapid Action Force — again saw a packed crowd. There were young people with bandages — indicating that they decided to return a day after the clashes with the police — and many who decided to come, from Delhi as well as outside, on Tuesday after they saw visuals of the violence during the Parliament march.

And the profile of the protesters is mixed and diverse: from English-speaking youngsters to lower-middle-class young, those from Delhi to the ones from small towns beyond, and also parents of students in the age group where competitive exams become a concern for families.

Sure, the gathering has Left activists and the usual anti-BJP groups, but their relative numbers are lower once the gathering swelled in the last two-three days. It is largely young,

and overwhelmingly Hindu. It abounds in protesters from the north of the Vindhyas, though there are some people from south India as well.

“I have a daughter in grade 9 and a son in grade 7. Exams are very important for us,” says Seema Sharma (first name changed), who hails from Haryana but has been living in Delhi for years. She pointed to a swelling just above her left wrist and added that she was hit with a baton by a policeman on Monday. She isn’t alone — there were multiple people, particularly younger ones, who had banded arms and wrists.

Abhijit Kumar (first name changed) hails from Bihar but is a student in Punjab. He told The Indian Express that he decided to come to Delhi after seeing the visuals of the Monday Parliament march. A group of youngsters, all conversing in English, refused to identify themselves but said they had all come from Mumbai after seeing Monday’s visuals.

The central glue of the protest — resignation of Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan and examination reforms — seems to have struck a chord with a diverse section of people, particularly youngsters. The Cockroach Janta Party is no longer a necessary fulcrum, as crowds have been thronging the venue beyond their mobilisational ability.

Sonam Wangchuk — much like Anna Hazare 15 years ago — remains a distant figure who has



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi being detained, Tuesday, ABHINAV SAHA

evoked a vague sense of apolitical austerity. That has been an additional pull factor for the largely leaderless mobilisation — but it goes beyond him too.

While a Union minister privately expressed surprise at the numbers that gathered in Lutyens’ Delhi on Monday, two sources in the BJP told The Indian Express that this gathering is not representative of the youth in general, and that the mobilisation through Instagram reels will die down very soon. There is a view in the party that such protests get amplified by the same cast of anti-BJP characters.

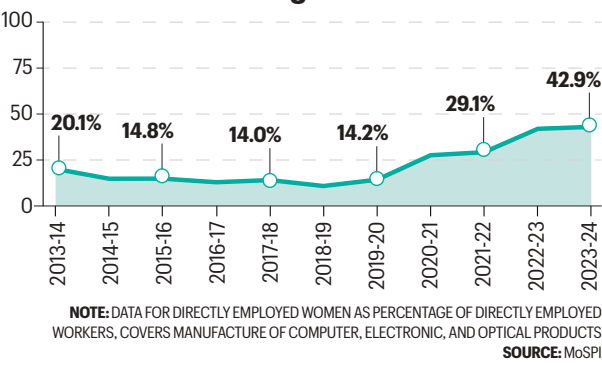
However, there are also murmurs in the party that some damage may have been done, particularly because competitive exam aspirants and their families north of the Vindhyas

have a high presence of the BJP’s core voters.

Significantly, even the Congress is not enthused, with some in the party expressing skepticism over Wangchuk’s ideological leanings, and adding that it was more a diversion from Rahul Gandhi’s programmes to raise the issue of paper leaks. However, after Sonia Gandhi’s advice days ago, the Congress has formally sympathised with Wangchuk and has now openly condemned the violence on Monday. On Tuesday evening, Congress leaders and workers led by Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi held a separate protest outside PM Modi’s residence — with Akhilesh Yadav joining them — and were detained, thus making the political opposition try to enter the narrative that has for a

E.

• 43% of women making electronics are in TN



setting up of a Battery Energy Storage System manufacturing facility at the SIPCOT Industrial Park in Tirunelveli district, days after another MoU worth Rs 1,000 crore was signed with Hitachi to expand the company’s facilities. The state is also reportedly in the race to be the home of Bajaj Auto’s proposed new manufacturing plant as well as Canadian firm Neo Per-

formance Materials’ rare earth magnet manufacturing base in the country. All of this should result in the hiring of more women.

According to Pooja Sharma Goyal, Founding CEO of The Udaiti Foundation — a non-profit working on improving the availability and accessibility of quality work for women — Tamil Nadu’s success lies in re-

solving housing for women workers, the one issue that leads to 80% of women declining jobs.

Treating housing as economic infrastructure and not welfare, Goyal says, the Tamil Nadu Working Women’s Hostels Corporation offers two models: industrial housing, involving large dormitory systems under SIP-COT; and Thozhi hostels, which are smaller, high-quality infrastructure with 100-150 beds. The 19 Thozhi hostels currently have 87% occupancy, and the number is set to rise to 46 over the next two years, Goyal says.

Housing as the X factor

According to a December 2024 paper by think-tank Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, almost half the working women hostels in the country are in just two states: Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Apart from security, the close proximity of these hostels to the place of work of the women helps attract and retain

migrant labour. For the employers, it reduces the requirement of providing last-mile mobility infrastructure.

But, in contrast to Tamil Nadu, Kerala’s share of women workforce in manufacturing electronics is low and went down from 8% in 2013-14 to 6% in 2023-24. However, it is still higher than states such as Andhra Pradesh (3%) and Uttar Pradesh (5%).

Other states are trying to catch up. In December, Foxconn hired nearly 30,000 people for its new iPhone assembly plant in Karnataka’s Devanahalli, of whom around 80% (24,000 or so) are reportedly women. The firm is adding more dormitory accommodations on its campus to add to the six already in place.

Low, but rapidly growing wages

The hostels are known to be restrictive, with factories reported to have avoided hiring married women in the past,

even as the drudgery and repetitive nature of work can be dispiriting.

Then there are the wages. In Chennai, the average monthly wage for salaried women was Rs 22,919 in 2025, lower than the million-plus city average of Rs 23,707 and almost half of top-ranked Prayagraj; it was even lower in Coimbatore (Rs 19,149) and Madurai (Rs 18,247).

Even in the manufacture of computers, electronics and optical products, where Tamil Nadu dominates, the average wage per worker in 2023-24 was Rs 2.45 lakh, lower than the all-India average of Rs 2.5 lakh. In top-ranked Telangana, this is Rs 4.46 lakh. But the wages have been growing faster than in most other states. Between 2013-14 and 2023-24, the average wage growth in Tamil Nadu was 83%, over twice the all-India average of 36%, and behind only Delhi (124%), Puducherry (115%), Madhya Pradesh (92%), Goa (90%) and Uttarakhand (89%).

• COIMBATORE AND MADURAI AT TOP IN FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE, MINISTRY DATA SHOWS

With a page out of China book, TN maintains lead in share of women workers

Siddharth Upasani
New Delhi, July 21

NEW DATA underlines how Tamil Nadu remains closest in India to replicating China’s women-led electronics manufacturing model, with other states far behind.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation’s (MoSPI) recent report on the labour market in India’s 46 most populous cities (with a population of more than 10 lakh as per Census 2011) shows that two Tamil Nadu cities — Coimbatore at 41.3% and Madurai at 37% — rank in the top three when it comes to the female Labour Force Participation Rate. This is well above the urban India average of 27.7%.

The Labour Force Participation Rate refers to the percentage of people either already employed or looking for work.

Sandwiched between the two, at 40.6%, is Surat. However, the Annual Survey of Industries

data shows that Gujarat’s share among women employed in the manufacture of computers, electronics and optical products remained stagnant at 10% from 2013-14 to 2023-24, even as it grew from 20% to 43% for Tamil Nadu in the same period.

At the same time, Maharashtra and Karnataka saw notable declines in the share of women they employ in the manufacture of computers, electronics and optical products — 24% to 6%, and 11% to 8%, between 2013-14 and 2023-24.

As a percentage of all women directly employed in India’s factories — irrespective of what they manufacture — Tamil Nadu remains the leader among states. It has largely held on to this lead, with its share showing only a slight decline from 43% in 2021-22 to 40% in 2023-24.

The TN effect

In 2023-24, Tamil Nadu accounted for nearly half the women directly employed

(contract staff excluded) in the manufacture of computers, electronics and optical products across the country — 14,814 of the total 34,531.

This figure has likely increased further since then after the inauguration in August 2024 by the state government and Foxconn of a women-only residential complex in Vallam Vadagal, Sriperumbudur. Built by the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIP-COT) at a cost of Rs 706.5 crore, it can house 18,720 workers.

The new MoSPI data on India’s 46 biggest cities is also far from the complete Tamil Nadu picture as it only covers cities which had a population of more than 10 lakh in Census 2011. This means new industrial hubs such as Hosur, Erode and Oragadam are not included as they had a population lower than that in Census 2011.

More recently, Tamil Nadu signed a Rs 15,000-crore agreement with Vikram Solar for the

CROSSWORD

6047

OVER THE HEDGE

BY MICHAEL FRY & T LEWIS

ROYAL STARS

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

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ACROSS

1 Poet involved with fruit cake (5,4)

8 Common stock (5)

9 Claimed to be a test of fitness (7)

10 Not a precious stone but possibly worn (6)

11 He's responsible for issues on a daily basis (6)

12 What gunrunners take part in? (4,4)

15 He likes to know the facts about drink (8)

18 Some direct orders for the clergyman (6)

20 It needs considerable resources to change the law (6)

21 They take pictures a hundred — a thousand — times (7)

22 Added recommendation for a jockey (5)

23 Cranks may be motivated by such an odd character (9)

DOWN

2 Correct some work the men did wrongly (5)

3 Di is to reform fools (6)

4 Below standard tirade is scandalous (8)

5 Geometrical instruments — dividers? (6)

6 Insect on animal is a cause of annoyance (7)

7 Sad boy seen when a vessel is about to leave (4,5)

11 Additional effort required in small parts (5,4)

13 Reg and Maria joined in wedlock (8)

14 Going higher — to where to find walking patients? (7)

16 Go back — but not to work (6)

17 Possibly a grave sign of stress (6)

19 A wild animal — but it's all right; a quiet one (5)

SOLUTIONS CROSSWORD 6046

ACROSS: 1 Palette, 4 Cinch, 7 Salt, 8 Earnings, 10 Editorship, 12 Broody, 13 Agency, 15 Drew one out, 18 Ding-dong, 19 Scow, 20 Prize, 21 Yielded

DOWN: 1 Paste, 2 Lollipop, 3 Elapse, 4 Contingent, 5 Nuns, 6 History, 9 Road bridge, 11 Enforced, 12 Build-up, 14 Twenty, 16 Towed, 17 Anti.

JUMBLLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective circles below. Select the letters in the shaded circles and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

The problem with _____ is not knowing when you are finished.

Nelson DeMille (5,7)

LPIOO

●●●●●

FUINT

●●●●●

EILDNN

●●●●●

AELGGH

●●●●●

SOLUTIONS: Jumbled words are: Problem, Finished, Problem, Finished.

ANSWER: The problem with the problem with doing nothing is not knowing when you are finished. - Nelson DeMille (5,7)

BY BILL WATTERSON

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

DIFFICULTY LEVEL 2s

INSTRUCTIONS

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

6387

SUDOKU

6386

SOLUTION SUDOKU

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Format C-2

(For political party to publish in website, newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal antecedents of candidates set up by the party

(As per the judgement dated 25th September, 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP(Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs.Union of India & Anr.)

Name of political party : BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP)

*Name of Election : COUNCIL OF STATES (RAJYA SABHA) BYE ELECTION 2026

Name of the State/UT : WEST BENGAL

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.		
Sl. No.	Name of candidate	Name of constituency	Pending criminal cases	Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences		
			Name of Court, case No. & status of the case(s)	Sections of the Acts concerned & brief description of offence(s)	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed
1.	SUKHENDU SEKHAR RAY	RAJYA SABHA, West Bengal	CJM, Alipore Complaint Case No.1573 of 2011 Charges have not been framed	Nature of offences : DEFAMATION	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE
2.	PRAKASH CHIK BARAIK	RAJYA SABHA, West Bengal	CJM, Alipurduar Kumargram Police Station Case No. 102/18, corresponding to G.R. No. 814/18 Charges have been framed	U/s 341/323/34 of IPC	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party

Shashi Agnihotri

State General Secretary

BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP)

WEST BENGAL

The Indian Express.

For the Indian Intelligent.

I look at every side before taking a side.

Inform your opinion with insightful observations.

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The Indian EXPRESS

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

After HC direction on wife’s petition, Wangchuk shifted to Medanta Hospital



An ambulance carrying Sonam Wangchuk arrives at Medanta. ANI

Sohini Ghosh
New Delhi, July 21

ACTIVIST SONAM Wangchuk, who is on his 24th day of hunger strike, was discharged from the Safdarjung Hospital on Tuesday evening and shifted to Medanta Hospital in Gurgaon for further treatment in compliance with a Delhi High Court order.

Wangchuk was brought to the Medanta Hospital in an ambulance at 7.28 pm under tight security. He has been admitted to ICU 8 and his treatment has begun under the supervision of Dr Sushila Kataria, an internal medicine specialist, said a hospital official.

The HC earlier in the day directed that Wangchuk be shifted to a hospital of his choice.

The bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia allowed his wife Gitanjali Angmo round-the-clock access to Wangchuk at Medanta Hospital. It also directed that Wangchuk be constantly monitored and that medicines be administered as required in the opinion of the hospital’s experts, and that Wangchuk shall abide by the advice.

Wangchuk, who has been on hunger strike since June 28, demanding Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation over NEET paper leaks, was hospitalised at Safdarjung Hospital after Delhi Police swooped in at the protest site in Jantar Mantar on July 18 and moved him to the hospital, citing his health condition.

The court, directing for the shift – as was desired by Wangchuk – opined that he “ought to be shifted to a hospital of his choice” and that it “will be in fulfilment of requirements of his fundamental rights” to life, free movement and personal liberty.

The order comes after HC took note of claims of violation of his fundamental rights – including excessive police searches on him and seized electronic devices – as alleged by Wangchuk in a letter.

Angmo, in her initial petition on July 19, had said that Wangchuk’s “continued confinement” at Safdarjung Hospital is “wholly without the authority of law,” with no FIR, order of arrest, preventive detention order or any other judicial or executive order authorising

“his continued confinement, isolation or denial of access to his legal counsel or doctors who had been examining him for the last 20 days”.

“Such deprivation of personal liberty, dehors any procedure established by law, is ex facie violative of Article 21 of the Constitution, and every passing hour of such unlawful confinement constitutes a continuing constitutional injury,” she had submitted.

However, the HC — the single judge or the division bench hearing the appeal — did not deal with this contention.

While disposing of the appeal and all pending pleas by Angmo, the HC told her counsel, senior advocate Akhil Sibal, on Tuesday: “The court’s concern is only with his safety and protection of fundamental rights, nothing else with what is going on.”

Angmo, welcoming the HC verdict, said that Wangchuk will continue his fast in a show of “solidarity with students who were beaten yesterday”.

Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta told the court that he has “no objection” to the proposal to shift, while urging HC that Wangchuk may not discharge himself from Medanta Hospital against medical advice, also known as DAMA.

DAMA and LAMA are medical terms for when a patient leaves the hospital before treatment is finished. While DAMA means ‘Discharge Against Medical Advice’, LAMA means ‘Left (or Leave) Against Medical Advice’.

A day ago, opposing Wangchuk’s transfer from Safdarjung, Mehta had argued that his right to bodily autonomy — right to choose his treatment — “cannot be absolute” since any potential harm to him can “have an impact on law and order situation”.

On Tuesday, the Resident Doctors’ Association at VMMC and Safdarjung Hospital as well as AIIMS sought the President’s intervention in relation to Wangchuk’s bodily autonomy, including LAMA or the right of a patient to leave hospital against medical advice.

The single-judge bench on July 19 had refused Angmo’s request to shift Wangchuk to a hospital of his choice. She had then appealed against the order before a division bench.



CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke meets protesters. ABHINAV SAHA



Protesters at Jantar Mantar on Tuesday. ABHINAV SAHA

At CJP’s resurrected Jantar Mantar stage, the scars of violence and defiant slogans

Devansh Mittal & Vidheesha Kuntamalla
New Delhi, July 21

BY AFTERNOON on Tuesday, the first row in front of the stage at the protest site at Jantar Mantar was packed once again.

Many of them — positioned an iron barricade away from the stage — were among those who got detained or sustained injuries barely 24 hours ago as the police and paramilitary forces used teargas and resorted to lathicharge to manage Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led protesters who took part in the ‘Sansad Chalo March’.

On Tuesday, many turned up with bandages on the foreheads, wrists or ankles; and casts on their legs or hands. Sitting before a hastily rebuilt stage, they raised slogans again.

The protest site, however, bore little resemblance to what it looked like the previous after-

noon. Some were heard saying: “We are not scared of the police.”

On Monday, several protesters, to shield themselves against police action, had arrived at Jantar Mantar, believing it would be a safe refuge. Within minutes, however, teargas shells were fired and lathicharge followed. In less than 10 minutes, the month-old protest site — the centrepiece of the CJP campaign — was emptied, the stage dismantled.

Even as many thought that the crackdown had brought the protest to an end, by Monday night, volunteers started returning. By Tuesday morning, they had rebuilt the stage. It stood draped in freshly tied red cloth, with mattresses and pillows strewn across the carpeted platform. The repairs were hurried, and the violence of the previous day was visible. The canopy had been torn on the backdrop. Sections of its metal frame re-



Security personnel at Jantar Mantar. ABHINAV SAHA

mained bent.

Addressing the gathering, Dipke announced that the organisation would pursue legal action against Delhi Police over Monday’s crackdown. When he asked the crowd if they were prepared to spend a few more days at the site, the response came in the form of loud cheers.

Meanwhile, several opposition leaders, including NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar,

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray visited the site on Tuesday and extended support to the agitation.

At one end of the stage stood portraits of Sonam Wangchuk alongside photographs of students who had died by suicide in the aftermath of the NEET re-exam controversy.

Organisers also converted a smaller platform into a relief

area for the injured. Beside the stage, hundreds of shoes and slippers had been carefully arranged in a large rectangle across the road — asilent monument, volunteers said, to the police action a day earlier.

Throughout the afternoon, chants of “Delhi Police, hai hai”, “Inquilab Zindabad”, “Jai Bhim” and “Dharmendra Pradhan is-tifado (resign)” rolled across the protest site. Members of outfits, including AISA, SFI, AISE, Collective, DISHA and ASAP formed circles, raising slogans, as police personnel watched from a distance. At intervals, announcements from loudspeakers urged protesters to stop raising slogans.

“The stage that we are sitting on right now was broken around 3.30 pm yesterday,” said Eeshna, Delhi in-charge of ASAP, the students’ wing of the AAP.

“The forces came in and pushed the students. Many

started running towards the stage and climbed over the barricades behind it. They broke the iron grill between the crowd and the stage where (CJP founder) Abhijeet Dipke and the others were sitting,” she said.

She said volunteers spent the entire night rebuilding the camp. “We haven’t been able to sleep at all for days.”

The camp, however, was struggling to meet even its basic needs. “We have run out of water. There is absolutely no food. It would be of great help if someone comes forward and contributes,” Eeshna said.

According to her, different student outfits had divided responsibilities to keep the protest functioning despite the damage. “ASAP is taking care of security, food and water. AISA was on a hunger strike until yesterday. AISE has been mobilising people, and SFI is managing the library we have set up here.”

Police lodge 6 FIRs, look for ‘larger conspiracy’ in Parliament march

Alok Singh
New Delhi, July 21

A DAY after violence erupted during the Cockroach Janta Party’s (CJP) protest march from Jantar Mantar to Parliament, the Delhi Police on Tuesday registered six FIRs and launched a probe into whether the violence was part of a larger conspiracy to disrupt peace in the Capital.

The FIRs were registered against unidentified people at Parliament Street, Barakhamba and Connaught Place police stations under sections related to rioting, damage to government and private property, and assaulting public servants on duty.

Police said the number of FIRs could increase as investigators continue to assess the alleged vandalism and damage caused during the CJP march.

Sources said the investigating team is examining CCTV footage, including that from cameras equipped with facial recognition technology, to identify those involved in the violence and attacks on police personnel. “We are also reviewing social media posts and mobile phone recordings as part of the probe,” the source said.

In a statement, the Delhi Police said protesters displayed “unruly, aggressive and violent behaviour” and refused to dis-

perse and deliberately violated prohibitory orders”.

“The protesters attacked police personnel with stones and other objects, attempted to breach police barricades, vandalised police and other government vehicles, damaged public property, and resorted to large-scale violence, posing a serious threat to public order, the security arrangements in place, and the safety of police personnel performing their lawful duties,” it added.

The police further said that protesters caused extensive damage to public property, vandalising 15 to 20 government vehicles and other properties.

More than 50,000 people had gathered for the march on Monday, with the police appearing to be outnumbered as protesters advanced toward the Parliament.

As the police used force, including batons and tear gas, to bring the situation under control, more than 200 people, including more than 100 police officers, were injured in the violence.

The police had said more than 118 of its personnel were injured, including senior officers ranging from special commissioners of police to assistant commissioners of police, as well as several women officers.



Security officers at Jantar Mantar, Tuesday. ABHINAV SAHA

Clashes at 4 places, say police in internal report

Mahender Singh Manral
New Delhi, July 21

THE DELHI Police used “mild force” on Monday to bring the situation under control after clashes mainly at four locations – Sansad Marg, Rail Bhawan roundabout, Jantar Mantar, and the Connaught Place Outer Circle-Janpath stretch – the New Delhi district police have said in an internal report, *The Indian Express* has learned.

At a meeting held in the office of DCP (New Delhi district) Sachin Sharma on Monday night, Delhi Police Commissioner Anurag Kumar was informed that the district police had begun preparing a factual

report on the events of the day, a source said.

The Special CP (law and order) and other senior police officers attended the meeting. Queries sent to DCP Sharma and the spokesperson for Delhi Police did not elicit responses.

According to the New Delhi district police report, close to 200 police personnel, including senior officers, were injured in the clashes. The report is learned to have said that the first confrontation took place on Sansad Marg. After being pushed back from Sansad Marg, sections of the crowd moved through Raisina Road towards Rail Bhawan, located near Parliament House.

● KIN SAY SHE HAD COME TO DELHI FOR SIGHTSEEING; SOURCES SAY SUFFERED ASPHYXIA IN A STAMPEDE-LIKE SITUATION

Student admitted in ICU after march — corridors in RML quieter, security tighter

Tabshir Shams & Drishti Jain
New Delhi, July 21

BY TUESDAY afternoon, the corridor outside the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on the fifth floor of Ram Manohar Lohiya Hospital had fallen quiet.

The doors to the ward swung open every few minutes before closing again. Two police officers sat on the staircase outside — one scrolling through reels on his phone, the other leaning against the railing. Along the corridor, attendants of other patients sat on the stairs, pausing their conversations each time a nurse, doctor

or ward attendant emerged through the doors.

According to the hospital staff, around 230 people were brought here for treatment after Monday’s police crackdown on the CJP protest. By Tuesday morning, while many had been discharged, only one protester — 21-year-old Sakshi, who is pursuing an Advanced Diploma in Computer Applications — remained in the ICU.

Several attendants said the atmosphere outside the ICU had changed since Monday.

Until a day earlier, they said, relatives could move in and out of the fifth floor with relative

ease. Since Sakshi’s admission, they said, security had become noticeably tighter. Now, attendants waited outside until hospital staff called them in during designated visiting hours.

“Earlier, it was much easier to meet our loved ones,” said an attendant whose mother has been in the ICU for the past eight days after suffering seizures. “Now everything has become strict. Unless the hospital staff allow it, nobody is allowed inside.”

Until shortly before noon, Sakshi’s family had been among those waiting in the same corridor.



Shoes left behind during Monday’s march collected near the protest site, Tuesday. ABHINAV SAHA

Her brother, Manish, sat quietly on the staircase after spending the night at the hospital. Speaking in short, measured sentences, he said he had barely slept.

“She had come to Delhi for sightseeing,” he said. “The next thing we heard was from the hospital.”

A few minutes later, the ICU doors opened again.

Sakshi’s mother stepped out. Dressed in a yellow suit with a dupatta covering her head, she walked slowly towards the lift, her eyes fixed on the floor.

One of her sons asked

Manish to gather Sakshi’s belongings — a blue-striped bedsheet, a small brown pillow, two bags and a medical file — from the staircase. As the family prepared to leave, they walked silently towards the lift.

Later that afternoon, as journalists gathered outside the ICU hoping to speak with them, hospital staff escorted the family away from the corridor to a private room. The staff later said they had gone to meet the hospital director.

According to sources, Sakshi suffered asphyxia in a stampede-like situation that broke out after teargas shells were

fired and protesters began running. She also sustained injuries to her face, chest and neck, the sources said.

When Sakshi was brought to the hospital on Monday, her family said she was placed on ventilator support.

By Tuesday evening, however, the family said her condition had improved significantly. She was conscious, well-oriented and had been taken off the ventilator after doctors told them she was no longer in critical condition.

“We are hopeful she will be discharged soon,” a family member said.

17 involved in Moga police station grenade attack arrested

Express News Service
Chandigarh, July 21

IN A major breakthrough Moga Police has thwarted a possible terror conspiracy with the arrest of 17 accused persons, including three main executors involved in the low-intensity grenade attack at Police Station Sadar Moga, said Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav here on Tuesday.

Police have also recovered an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) along with explosive material and electronic detonator and one 9MM Glock pistol along with a magazine, besides, impounding the Splendor motorcycle (PB-03-AH-3088) used in committing the grenade attack.

As per information, some unidentified persons threw a low-intensity grenade at the building of Sadar Moga police station during the early morning hours at around 3.15 AM on July 8, 2026.

The three main executors who executed the grenade attack were identified as Gagan alias Kali, Rajesh alias Khanna, and Shubham alias Bhinder. Remaining arrested accused — who assisted in logistics, network expansion, and harboring the operatives — were identified as Lajjar alias Aman and his wife Parveen Kaur, Swaran, Gobind, Sagar, John, Ruth, Raj, Sarabjit Kaur, Gurpreet Singh, Rahul, Karandeep Singh, Lovpreet, and Sukhwinder Kaur.

DGP Gaurav Yadav said that a preliminary probe has revealed that Iqbal Singh alias Ravi Dhaliwal, based in the UK and allegedly involved in criminal activities, was the mastermind behind the conspiracy. On his directions, the accused carried out the grenade attack at Sadar Moga police station and were planning to plant an IED in a train running from Ferozpur to Jammu. The DGP said that further probe is underway to uncover the entire network and identify all associates involved. IGP Faridkot Range Nilambari Jagdale said multiple police teams were deployed to trace the perpetrators.

Wangchuk, CJP protesters are traitors: UP minister

Press Trust of India
Lucknow, July 21

UTTAR PRADESH Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay on Tuesday termed the CJP's agitation at Delhi's Jantar Mantar a "protest by traitors." The minister also termed activist Sonam Wangchuk a "rashtrodrohi." "This is a protest by the traitors," he told a news channel here.

Asked whether Wangchuk, on a hunger strike for more than 20 days, was also a "traitor", the minister said, "Definitely. For whom are they holding protests? On which issue are they holding protests?"

On Union education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the minister said, "The Union minister is not to be blamed. It is the officials who should be blamed (for the NEET paper leak). Had the Union minister resigned, then the official would have got away."

MP Assembly passes UCC Bill, Congress slams 'RSS agenda'

Anand Mohan J
Bhopal, July 21

THE MADHYA Pradesh Assembly on Tuesday passed the Madhya Pradesh Uniform Civil Code (UCC), 2026, Bill amid protests from the Opposition.

The legislation, introduced on the second day of the monsoon session on Monday, creates a common civil law governing marriage, divorce, inheritance and live-in relationships, while exempting Scheduled Tribes covered under Articles 342 and 366(25) of the Constitution. It bans polygamy, criminalises practices such as triple talaq and nikah halala, mandates registration of marriages, divorces and live-in relationships, and grants equal inheritance rights irrespective of gender.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, replying to the debate, described the legislation as a landmark reform. "Golden history is being written in this Assembly today," he said, adding that the law would "criminalise triple talaq and halala, prohibit polygamy, make registration of marriage and divorce mandatory and give equal inheritance rights to all children".

Calling the legislation a fulfillment of the Constitution's vision under Article 44, Yadav said, "The fundamental



Congress leaders protest against the UCC Bill in Bhopal, Tuesday. PTI

spirit of the UCC is 'Equality for All, Respect for All'. It is not just our sentiment but the sentiment of the entire country. Everyone, especially women, should have their rights."

Launching a sharp attack on the Congress, he further alleged that the Opposition was opposing the legislation only for "Muslim appeasement". "If Congressmen have even a little respect for Babasaheb Ambedkar, they should wash away their sins by supporting the UCC," he said, adding, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave rights to Muslim women by abolishing

triple talaq. We are implementing the UCC so that Amar, Akbar, Anthony, Robin and Rahim all live under the same law."

He also defended the exclusion of Scheduled Tribes from the legislation. "The tribal community has been excluded in accordance with constitutional provisions. We have respected their constitutional safeguards and traditional rights." Explaining provisions of the law, he said, "Duties and rules are the same for everyone. The minimum age for marriage will be 21 years for men and 18 years for women. Marriage registration will be

mandatory. Only those who have married once will be allowed to live in Madhya Pradesh. Only after divorce will a person be able to live with a second life partner. No one will be able to arbitrarily say 'talaq, talaq, talaq'. Registration will also be required for live-in relationships."

He added that the UCC "is a great opportunity to provide equal opportunities and justice to people from all walks of life" and said, "This is a Bill that strengthens national unity, integrity, women's respect and social harmony."

Earlier in the debate, senior Congress MLA Arif Masood opposed the legislation and urged Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar to send it to a Select Committee. "This Bill contains many inconsistencies. The Union government itself has not implemented a Uniform Civil Code. The matter has remained pending before the Law Commission for three years." Masood argued that the legislation infringed constitutional protections. "The Bill violates the fundamental rights relating to culture and education guaranteed under Article 29 of the Constitution," he said, while moving amendments seeking detailed legislative scrutiny.

The House rejected the amendments by voice vote.

LoP Umang Singhar backed the demand to refer the legislation to a Select Committee, saying the state faced more pressing concerns. "There is no need for a Uniform Civil Code in Madhya Pradesh at present. The issue of 27 per cent reservation for OBCs is more important," he said.

Congress legislators later rushed to the Well of the House, shouting slogans, following which Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar passed the Bill by voice vote amid the din.

Outside the Assembly, Singhar accused the BJP government of using the legislation to pursue ideological objectives while ignoring governance issues. "The BJP government wants to implement the RSS agenda in the name of the UCC and is running away from the real issues of the people," Singhar said in a statement. "The government is asleep like a dead government when it comes to the people's problems. Farmers are facing a shortage of fertilisers, youth are wandering in search of employment, crimes against women are continuously increasing and scams are being exposed, but the government is silent on these serious issues."

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

No stay on Kerala Waqf Board curbs, SC drops govt oversight clause

Express News Service
New Delhi, July 21

THE SUPREME COURT on Tuesday declined to interfere with the Kerala High Court's ad-interim direction barring the state Waqf Board from taking any major decisions or incurring any capital expenditure as its constitution is prima facie not in conformity with the 2025 Waqf Amendment Act that requires the inclusion of two non-Muslim members and one Shia member in it.

A three-judge bench presided over by CJI Surya Kant, however, deleted the HC's direction that the Board function under the supervision of the government's joint secretary or additional secretary.

The bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana, said, "In view of the opening line of para 6 (of the high court order), whereunder Board has been directed to not undertake any capital expenditure etc. without leave of the court, we are satisfied that there is no necessity for retention of last line of para 6 of the order. Consequently, the direction that the Board shall function under supervision of jt. secy/ additional secretary of government is hereby deleted."

The top court noted that the matter was coming up before the high court again on Wednesday and urged it to decide expeditiously. The court was hearing an appeal filed by the Board against the high court's interim direction, which came on public interest litigations (PILs) questioning its constitution.



People move to a safer place from a flood-affected area in Assam's Sivasagar district on Tuesday. PTI

Water levels unseen in half a century, says CM as Assam flood toll rises to 11; 3L affected

Sukrita Baruah
Guwahati, July 21

LARGE PARTS of Assam continued to be flooded on Tuesday morning, with one more person dying in Upper Assam, taking the total death toll in this year's floods in the state to 11.

According to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the "unprecedented flooding" in the Upper Assam districts of Sivasagar, Jorhat and Charaideo has resulted in "water levels unseen in half a century".

As of 8 am on Tuesday, five rivers — the Brahmaputra in Neamatighat, the Burhidighing in Khowang, the Dikhow in Sivasagar, the Disang in Nganglamuraghat, and the Dhansiri in Golaghat and Numaligarh — continued to flow over danger levels.

Large swathes of Upper Assam have been hit by floods caused by rivers swelling after

heavy rains since Sunday.

On Tuesday morning, 12,720 people were in a total of 52 relief camps set up in response to the acute flood situation, and a total of 9,160 people were evacuated by boats, officials said.

According to estimates by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority, a total of 3.1 lakh people were affected as of Tuesday morning, with 14,411 hectares of crop areas submerged.

"Landslides were reported in five parts of Guwahati on Monday evening. There have been no additional incidents on Tuesday," an ASDMA official said.

Meanwhile, the Railways announced special trains to assist passengers stranded by train cancellations because of inundation of railway tracks in and around Simalguri town in Sivasagar district.

'People will think twice about sailor jobs': UP village mourns man killed in Russian strike

Manish Sahu
Lucknow, July 21

ABHISHEK NISHAD, 22, a native of Uttar Pradesh's Deoria district, was among four Indian seafarers killed on Sunday when a Russian missile struck a merchant vessel shortly after it departed Ukraine's southern port of Odesa. A total of 10 people died in the attack.

The voyage was Nishad's first assignment at sea. "Abhishek became interested in a maritime career after speaking with his cousin, Jairaj Nishad, a sailor for the past few years," said his father Kaushal Nishad, who runs a cloth shop in Karmel. "...On June 9, Abhishek left for his first assignment as an Ordinary Seaman. He flew to Turkey via Mumbai to join the vessel."

"Everyone in our family and neighbourhood was proud that one of our boys had secured a job overseas. We never imagined it would end in such a tragedy," he said. The second of three children born to Kaushal Nishad and his wife Anita Devi, a homemaker, Abhishek was the first member of his family to secure employment abroad. "He called us regularly, and we last spoke on the evening of July 19. He



Abhishek Nishad

asked how everyone was doing and said he was settling into his new job," his father said.

"Just a few hours later, the ship came under a missile attack." Unaware of the strike, the family attempted to call him the next day, but his phone went unanswered. Representatives from the shipping firm later contacted them with the news of his death. The family is waiting for Abhishek's remains to be repatriated and has not yet been informed when the body will arrive home.

Jitendra Bahadur Nishad, the village head, said Abhishek was among a handful of local youths who had joined the merchant navy and was the latest to do so. "This tragedy has shaken our village," he said.

Meanwhile, India on Tuesday summoned Russia's charge d'affaires and lodged a strong protest over the incident.

1996 Dausa blast: SC sets aside death sentence

Ananthakrishnan G
& Hamza Khan
New Delhi, July 21

THE SUPREME COURT Tuesday set aside the conviction and death sentence of Abdul Hameed in the 1996 Samleti, Dausa, bus bomb blast case, citing denial of adequate legal assistance during his original trial. It also set aside the conviction of another key accused, Pappu alias Salim, while refusing to interfere with the High Court's acquittal of the remaining persons in the case.

The May 22, 1996, blast killed 14 people and injured 37 as it ripped through a Rajasthan Roadways bus travelling from Agra to Bikaner near Samleti village in Rajasthan's Dausa district. The blast came a day after the Lajpat Nagar bomb blast in Delhi in which 13 people were killed.

Overtaking a July 2019

judgment of the Rajasthan High Court that had upheld Hameed's conviction and capital sentence, a Supreme Court Bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta ordered a fresh trial, directing that the proceedings be concluded within one year.

"The true measure of justice does not lie in the swiftness of retribution, but in the discipline of restraint. It is a canonical maxim of criminal jurisprudence that it is better for a hundred guilty persons to escape than for one innocent person to be condemned," the Court observed.

"If the trial is found to have been conducted in breach of the constitutional guarantee of a fair trial, the very foundation of the conviction would stand vitiated," the apex court said, adding that the proceedings of the trial court "do not reflect

that Dr Abdul Hameed was represented by a legal counsel at any stage".

Highlighting that 30 years have passed since the attack, the Supreme Court asked the High Court to assign the retrial to a specialised fast-track court presided over by a judicial officer with at least seven years of experience in sessions trials.

Clarifying that its order is based on the lack of fairness and procedural propriety in the case, and that it had not gone into its merits, the Court said: "The special court shall independently appreciate the evidence... and decide the matter strictly on its own merits without being influenced by any observation contained in this judgement."

The Court also spoke to Hameed, who is lodged in Jaipur Central Jail, via videoconferencing, during which he said that he had "not engaged any private

counsel and that no legal aid counsel was ever provided to him by the trial court".

One of the arguments by the prosecution in seeking death for Hameed was that he was also named in the Republic Day blast at SMS Stadium in Jaipur in 1996.

Incidentally, an outfit called the Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front had taken responsibility for the Samleti blast at the time.

While Hameed, who was arrested on June 26, 1997, has now been in jail for 29 years, Salim was arrested a month later and was imprisoned for over 23 years before he was released on parole in 2020.

Among the accused, Riaz Ahmad Sheikh, died during the pendency of the trial. Another accused, Kulwinderjit Singh, was discharged by Additional Sessions Judge, Bandikui, in

February 2003. In 2014, the High Court dropped charges against a third accused, Chandra Prakash Agarwal.

Finally, 18 years after the blast, on September 29, 2014, the trial court convicted seven people — Hameed, Javed Khan, Abdul Goni, Lateef Ahmad Waja, Mohammad Ali Bhatt, Mirza Nisar Hussain and Raees Baeg, while acquitting Farukh Ahmed Khan on the grounds that the evidence against him could not be proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Of those convicted, Hameed was sentenced to death, and the others given sentences ranging from life to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment.

The trial court concluded that Hameed and an associate had boarded the ill-fated bus, planted the bomb under the seats in front of them, and then disembarked.

IIT-Roorkee gag order against supporting political movements

Aiswarya Raj
Dehradun, July 21

THE INDIAN INSTITUTE of Technology (IIT) Roorkee has asked its students not to join political discussions or activities, and make a statement without the permission of the institute.

In a mail from the IIT-Roorkee Registrar dated July 20, students were told, "It has been noticed on social media platforms... that some of the campus inmates (have) shown their affinity with political movements like the one currently, in public utterance and criticism. All the students, employees, stakeholders are politely reminded herewith that IIT admitted students or appointed staff to provide for instructions, research and for the advancement

ment of learning, and dissemination of knowledge in engineering, technology, sciences and arts.

"It is engraved in the notified conduct rules that no student or employee will be allowed to join political discussion or participate in any political activity without prior permission from the institute or make any statement or opinion in any broadcast/teletext or in print or e-media in any public utterance which is capable of embarrassing the relations between the institute and the Centre or any other Organisations or members of the public."

Though the mail comes against the backdrop of the Jantar Mantar protests led by the Cockroach Janta Party, it did not mention that by name.

On the same day as the mail, the institute had posted on X that it "is committed to maintaining the distinction between personal expressions and official institutional communications".

"Any views or content shared by individuals in their personal capacity are their own and should not be interpreted as reflecting the position or endorsement of the Institute. Official communications of IIT Roorkee are issued only through its designated and authorised channels," the post said.

Issuing a statement to the media later, IIT Roorkee media in-charge, Sonika Srivastava, said that the communication is an internal advisory circulated among students, faculty, and staff at the commencement of each academic session.

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IT BEGAN with a sound heard for the first time in the forests of Panna National Park. The crack of hydraulic breakers echoed, followed by the growl of excavators and the relentless crawl of bulldozers.

Hillsides were cut open, and forest tracks widened into construction roads. Concrete and steel arrived where only rock, river and trees stood before. One of India's largest engineering projects, the Rs 44,605-crore Ken-Betwa Link Project, had begun reshaping the landscape.

After decades of uncertainty, the project to link the Ken and Betwa rivers has entered a decisive phase, triggering a race to evacuate nearly 2,000 families across 10 villages — a rushed deadline that has fuelled protests across the submergence zone as residents challenge compensation surveys, eligibility lists and the terms on which they are being asked to leave.

For the administration, the remaining months are about meeting engineering timelines, completing rehabilitation and clearing the reservoir before the next phase of construction. For the many families still living in the shadow of the Daudhan dam — one of the main architectural features under the project — it's a struggle of a different kind: proving, through Aadhaar cards, school certificates, revenue records and decades-old family registers, that they belong to the places they are being asked to abandon.

When two rivers meet

The idea of linking India's rivers dates back to the early 1980s. The National Water Development Agency, set up in 1982 to examine the feasibility of interlinking river basins, identified the Ken-Betwa Link, as a priority project. The project, India's first inter-basin river link, aims to transfer water from the Ken to the Betwa basin.

A feasibility report followed in 1995, and in August 2005, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and the Centre agreed to prepare a Detailed Project Report. The Union Cabinet finally approved the project in December 2021, transforming the landscape around the rivers into construction sites.

Officials say that once ready, the project will irrigate 9.04 lakh hectares, utilise more than 4,843 million cubic metres of water, generate 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar energy, and supply nearly 194 million cubic metres of drinking water each year.

The irrigation network will extend across some of the most parched districts of Bundelkhand such as Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Panna, Damoh, Vidisha, Sagar, Shivpur, Datia and Raisen in Madhya Pradesh, and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh.

At the heart of the project is the Daudhan dam planned across the Ken river in Madhya Pradesh — a structure that stretches for more than 2 km. The reservoir of the dam is designed to hold 2,853 million cubic metres of water, while two proposed power stations at the site are expected to generate more than 219 million units of electricity annually.

Water from the Daudhan reservoir will flow through a 221-km link canal (which gives the Ken-Betwa Link project its name) into the Betwa basin. The network also includes other irrigational structures such as the Lower Orr Project, the Kotha Barrage, the Bina Complex Multipurpose Project across Sagar and Raisen districts and the restored Ken Canal System in Uttar Pradesh.

Construction gathered pace in April 2025. By February 2026, officials said most of the machinery was in place, river diversion works were underway, and excavation of the Daudhan dam's foundation was in progress.

Beneath the appearance of steady progress is a parallel story — of environmental, administrative and engineering challenges.

Officials say additional private land is still needed to widen the approach roads to the dam. Acquisition proceedings covering nearly 28 hectares are underway, with notifications issued in some cases and records still being processed in others. Water pipelines, electricity lines and government structures within the project's right of way also remain incomplete, said a project engineer.

But the biggest set of unresolved tasks concerns rehabilitation. Villages within the submergence zone must be evacuated before construction can proceed in full.

Official project documents estimate that construction of the Daudhan dam will directly submerge about 2,171 hectares of village land, while the wider submergence area spans roughly 9,000 hectares.

The project's resettlement and rehabilitation plan identifies 1,913 affected families across 10 villages, with an estimated population of 8,339. The region has a significant tribal presence: Scheduled Tribes account for 33.9% of residents.

But the biggest headache for the state government is the Environmental Clearance stipulation by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change which mandates that all "rehabilitation and resettlement issues be completed before commissioning of the project".

Those left behind

The paperwork suggests rehabilitation is nearing completion, but Daudhan village — a 20-minute ride from the dam site through unmotorable roads cutting through the forest — suggests otherwise.

Houses stand ripped open, roofs pulled down, walls sliced in half by excavators. Entire lanes end in mounds of rubble, twisted steel and broken timber. On May 13, 2026, the administration brought in bulldozers. While officials say they only pulled down homes of those who had relocated, as well as vacant structures on government land, villagers allege the demolition was carried out without adequate warning.

For two weeks, a few hundred villagers from Daudhan, Palkhua and Sukwaha, the three villages in the submergence zone of the dam, sat on a protest by the banks of the



INDIA'S FIRST INTER-BASIN RIVER LINK

KEN, BETWA AND A LINE DRAWN ON WATER

After decades of uncertainty, the Ken-Betwa river linking project, which aims to irrigate the parched Bundelkhand region, is now racing to meet new deadlines. ANAND MOHAN J travels along the Ken to see how a Rs 44,605-crore engineering project is reshaping the river — and the lives along its banks



For two weeks, villagers from Daudhan, Palkhua and Sukwaha sat on a protest by the banks of the Ken, in Kupi village; in Daudhan, houses stand ripped open, roofs pulled down; at the resettlement colony in Kavar Karondiya, in Chhatarpur district. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANAND MOHAN J

• The project in numbers

9,000 ha

of land likely to be submerged

5,258 ha

of this is forest land

4,141 ha

is core Panna Tiger Reserve land

9.04 lakh ha

of land is expected to get water for irrigation from the project

194

million cubic metres of drinking water is expected to be supplied every year, once the river linking project is ready

Ken, in Kupi village, alleging irregularities in land acquisition, rehabilitation and compensation for families affected by the project. On July 19, police detained their leader, social activist Amit Bhatnagar and several other demonstrators from the site, effectively ending the protest for now.

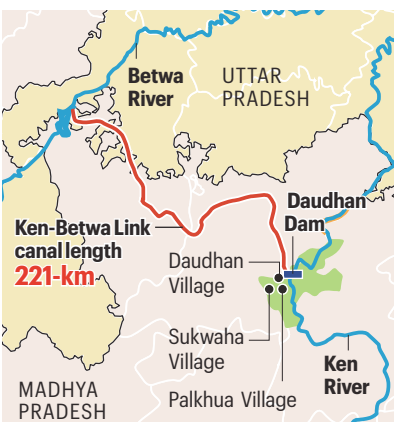
In September 2023, the Madhya Pradesh government had announced a special rehabilitation package for families affected by the Daudhan dam, under which every adult in a family is entitled to Rs 12.5 lakh, with a couple counted as a single unit. Compensation for homes range from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1.5 lakh. In addition to this, they are given plots in Kavar Karondiya, a notified resettlement colony 25-30 km by road from Daudhan, where they can build new homes.

Yet, amid the rubble in Daudhan, dozens of families remain, many insisting they were left out of surveys, denied compensation or never recognised as separate households.

Nandkishore Adivasi spends most afternoons squatting on the floor of his mud house in Daudhan, grinding red chillies into chutney on a stone slab. The house has stood here for generations. His family has already moved to the resettlement colony in Karondiya, but he stayed behind because the house was never counted during the survey and his mother was not counted. "I want to leave; my house does not have electricity, water or even a proper toilet. But not until my mother receives her compensation," he says.

A few lanes away, Phool Chand was counted, but his daughter was not. "My house has also not been counted. The local *patwari* (land record official) made a mess of the survey. My elder daughter was not counted. The school in the village has been shut for months now, and my younger daughter is at home," he says.

Mannu Yadav, widowed decades ago when her husband drowned in the Ken,



clutches her Aadhaar card as she speaks. In the absence of any other document, it is the only one with which she can argue that she exists in a place where, according to the survey records, she does not. "The government does not recognise me, they didn't count me. I am fighting to change that," she says.

Across Daudhan, where an estimated 100-150 people still remain, the same administrative gaps recur with minor variations: a house omitted from the survey, a missing name, an excluded family member, an undercounted parcel of land.

Chhatarpur Collector Parth Jaiswal says the district has already shifted about 380 families from Daudhan in the first phase and subsequently extended rehabilitation benefits to another 100 families. "We have disbursed around Rs 750 crore in compensation. If there are people left behind, I will ensure as many surveys as possible," he said.

Official reports show the rehabilitation exercise has advanced well: in Chhatarpur, nearly 89% of land compensation, almost 96% of asset compensation and more than 96% of rehabilitation payments have been

disbursed. Across neighbouring Panna, close to 90% of land compensation and almost all rehabilitation payments have been released.

"Once the river diversion begins, the remaining houses cannot stay in the submergence area. We have to complete the evacuation before that stage," says Jaiswal.

Jaiswal said only about 30 to 35 cases remain unresolved in Daudhan village, but they are also the most complicated. "These are not simple cases... Most involve disputes over eligibility or documentation."

The struggle to get counted

What a family loses by leaving Daudhan extends far beyond what any compensation schedule can capture. Those living in the forests around Panna collect seasonal produce, and walk familiar paths with landmarks that existed only because generations before them had learnt where water lingered, where wildlife moved and where crops could survive another uncertain monsoon.

A good mahua season could pay for a wedding, school fees or an old debt. The tendu harvest brought weeks of work, while amla, honey and fuelwood sustained families through the year. Even those who migrated to construction sites in Delhi or Gurgaon often returned for the mahua bloom and the tendu harvest.

What the *patwari*'s compensation register does record — land, houses, standing crops and recognised family units — has, in the final months before these villages disappear, acquired extraordinary importance. For generations, land anchored a family's identity and inheritance. Today, that role increasingly belongs to the plastic folder carrying Aadhaar cards, school certificates, voter identity cards, revenue records and handwritten family registers, shuffled from one government office to another in the hope of proving who the state recognises.

Collector Jaiswal rejects allegations that the rehabilitation survey was flawed. "Every house was photographed, every family documented. People were informed repeatedly through *gram sabhas*," he says.

Sukwaha sits deep inside the forest, reached by an uneven track that is still not fully motorable, making this a 70-km commute from Daudhan dam.

The village is small, with its mud houses — many of them now partially razed, like in Daudhan and Palkhua — scattered between patches of cultivation and trees.

Krishna Adivasi struggles to describe his loss in monetary terms because much of what sustained his family was never recognised as an asset in the first place. "They took our forest, our river and our mahua," he says.

His family of eight received a mere Rs 12 lakh; he says he won't move out until he gets what he is entitled to. Today, several of his family members travel to Chhatarpur for daily-wage work. "Everything has changed. My children dropped out of school," he says.

Vidya Rani once owned three houses and farmland in Sukwaha. Only her husband received Rs 12 lakh in compensation. "If we want to buy new fertile land, the rates are up to Rs 10-20 lakh. We can never buy back what we lost," she says. Her school-age children work as farm labourers in villages. "We don't want more money. We just want enough land to survive."

Santosh Adivasi has become an unlikely broker in Palkhua village, 10 km from the dam site. A property dealer, he sits with a cloth bag full of cash, counting bundles of notes into the hands of villagers as they sell whatever private land lies outside the project's acquisition boundary. For many, these sales are the only way to bridge the gap between the compensation received and the cost of starting over elsewhere. Most plots, he says, fetch between Rs 2 lakh and Rs 5 lakh.

Kalu Adivasi spent years working on construction sites in Delhi before returning to Palkhua when the work dried up. He had bought a parcel of land to set up a store near his village for Rs 3 lakh. He was forced to sell it for Rs 2.5 lakh. "The administration warned us to find new land, otherwise my shop will be demolished after the monsoons. So we have to sell our precious land... it's heartbreaking," he said.

A new beginning

At the resettlement colony in Kavar Karondiya, in Chhatarpur district, fresh brick houses stand beside half-finished ones. Courtyards are filled not with cattle or kitchens, but stacks of bricks, steel rods and cement bags waiting for the next stage of construction. There is no water supply and the resettled villagers shell out Rs 500 for 5,000-litre water tankers.

Ram Swarup says he has spent nearly half his compensation money on building two modest houses. His 17-year-old son has dropped out of school to work as a labourer. Around him, neighbours constantly weigh the price of bricks, cement, iron and sand against the compensation they received.

Dasharath Adivasi from Daudhan, who now runs a small shop selling chips, chewing gum and ice lollies in Karondiya, says he earns Rs 300-400 a day. Back in the village, there were days when he made Rs 5,000 a day. "Half the village hasn't shifted here yet. Without people, there is no business," he says.

Durji Adivasi walks nearly a kilometre every morning to the colony's only hand pump. Filling two buckets can take up to 40 minutes before she carries them home. The family cannot afford tanker water, she says, and the nearest ration shop is about six kilometres away. But she is gradually discovering a new life. "In Daudhan, our house didn't even have electricity," she says, sitting under a lone, white bulb. "Also, I now have a radio. I have been listening to songs".

• Key projects

DAUDHAN DAM

77-METRE-HIGH

• 2,853 million cubic metres gross storage capacity

• 70% foundation excavation is done

• 13% excavation completed for dam approach channel

• Work on river diversion, foundation concreting, construction of the main dam body, spillway, gates yet to begin

LINK CANAL

EARLY STAGES

• 65% of work on access roads completed

• Designs of 2 tunnels are yet to be finalised

• 21% of tunnel portals is built

HYDROPOWER STATIONS

130 MW TOTAL CAPACITY

• Power House-I location is under verification

• DPR for Power House-II yet to be finalised

THE GOVERNMENT IS WEIGHING A STANDALONE LAW TO REGULATE AI

AI law may cover agent autonomy, deepfakes

Two legal experts have been asked to submit separate draft liability frameworks for AI models

Soumyarendra Barik
New Delhi, July 21

THE MINISTRY of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is exploring a consent-based framework for synthetically-generated content, along with curbs on agentic AI autonomy, and regulatory sandboxes for high-risk applications as it weighs a separate law to regulate artificial intelligence (AI), *The Indian Express* has learnt.

Synthetically-generated content is digital media made or altered by AI, rather than humans. The AI law is likely to be presented as a standalone piece of legislation, rather than being under the umbrella of the Information Technology Act, 2000, a senior government official told *The Indian Express*.

The cyber laws division of the IT Ministry, which is responsible for formulating laws and policies that impact tech companies, has been asked to carry out a regulatory analysis of the IT Act, and the various rules made under it, to understand existing gaps.

In the case of agentic AI, the government is expected to consider how much autonomy such agents should have, and whether they should be permitted to retain and reuse data.

Agentic AI refers to autonomous AI systems that go beyond simply generating text. Given a high-level goal, they independently plan multi-step actions, utilise external tools, and adjust their strategy in real

● REGULATING AI

IN THE case of agentic AI, the government is expected to consider how much autonomy such agents should have, and whether they should be permitted to retain and reuse data

AGENTIC AI defers to autonomous AI systems that go beyond simply generating text. Given a high-level goal, they independently plan multi-step actions, utilise external tools, and adjust their strategy in real time to achieve the desired outcome with minimal human supervision

time to achieve the desired outcome with minimal human supervision.

The IT Ministry is also expected to consult the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), to set up a regulatory sandbox for AI applications, particularly in high-impact areas such as finance and public services.

Platform liability, safe harbour in AI era

Another major conversation currently taking place is the liability that AI platforms and companies – that have developed them – should have for the content that the models generate.

In the consumer Internet world, social media platforms have something called safe harbour, which is legal immunity from hosting user-generated content. This is based on the idea that platforms can not preempt what a user is going to post, and therefore should not be held liable for any problematic speech they may have made.

In the AI world, however,



THE IT Ministry is also expected to consult the RBI, and the SEBI, to set up a regulatory sandbox for AI applications, particularly in high-impact areas such as finance and public services

that same logic is difficult to translate directly. AI models are trained on content present on the Internet, and inevitably use that information to build their responses.

However, while pattern matching for keywords, these models also editorialise their responses in a way where it may be hard to track its exact statements back to a particular source.

It is understood that the government has asked two legal experts from the private sector to submit separate draft liability frameworks for AI models.

Queries sent to the IT Ministry remained unanswered until publication.

“Building a consent-based framework for synthetically generated media would be one of the key requirements for an AI law. We have seen the rapid proliferation of deepfakes on the Internet, and most of them, if not all, are generated by using pictures or videos of individuals whose consent has not been sought by the creator or the platform generating such media,” a senior government official said, requesting anonymity.

● BRIEFLY

Maruti Suzuki to hike prices by up to Rs 30,000

New Delhi: Car market leader Maruti Suzuki India on Tuesday said it will hike prices of its vehicles across models by up to Rs 30,000 from August to partially offset the sustained increase in input costs. The exact quantum of change will vary from model to model, Maruti Suzuki India said. “In view of the continuous sustained increase in input costs, the company has decided to increase the prices of its models across its portfolio by up to Rs 30,000,” the company said. PTI

‘50k to take part in Franklin MF Olympiad 2026’

Mumbai: Franklin Templeton National Mutual Fund Olympiad (F’TNMFO) 2026 — which aims to strengthen financial literacy and investment awareness among students — is expected to reach out to 50,000 students from more than 1,000 colleges across India for their participation, said FinX, a platform for BFSI learning and certification programmes. Undergraduate and postgraduate students across academic disciplines are invited to participate, with the Olympiad expected to engage over 50,000 students from more than 1,000 colleges across India, it said. ENS

● MARKETS

 Sensex 77,470.11 -238.41 -0.31%	 NIFTY 24,187.70 -50.80 -0.21%	 Gold ▲ ₹1,43,137	 US Dollar ▼ ₹96.24
 Silver ▲ ₹2,23,204	 Oil ▲ \$85.51	NOTE: GOLD, SILVER RATES AS PER INDIA BULLION AND JEWELLERS ASSOCIATION DATA GOLD PER 10G, SILVER PER 1KG; CRUDE OIL (INDIAN BASKET) AS OF JULY 20, 2026	

FIRM'S MARKET CAPITALIZATION STANDS AT RS 1.24 LAKH CR

SBI Funds lists at 7% gain, misses Street expectations

Akash Mandal
Mumbai, July 21

SBI FUNDS Management ended its debut trading session up around 6.3% from its issue price of Rs 575 on Tuesday.

The asset management wing of SBI had earlier made its market debut at a 7% premium, missing grey-market expectations of a 13-16% listing day gain. The stock, which had listed at Rs 613.30 a share on the National Stock Exchange (NSE), rose to as much as Rs 624.95 at its intraday high before ending the session at Rs 610.15 on the NSE.

The listing gains took the company's market capitalization to Rs 1.24 lakh crore. Peers ICICI Prudential and HDFC Asset Management Company have a market cap of Rs 1.56 lakh crore and Rs 1.11 lakh crore, respectively.

Despite the below-expected listing, analysts remained positive on the stock due to its market leadership, competitive valuations, and long-term growth potential. SBI Funds Management is India's largest asset management company, with over Rs 12.5 lakh crore in assets under management and over 15% market share as of March 31.

The fund's strong distribution strength has built one of the country's biggest SIP franchises, which sets the company up for long-term success with an attractively valued stock, analysts from Equirius Capital said in a report. The company raised Rs 9,813 crore from its public issue, which was subscribed 41.66

● SBI Funds is 2nd-largest AMC by market cap



FUND HOUSE	MARKET CAP (RS CR)
ICICI Prudential AMC	1,55,889
SBI Funds	1,24,277
HDFC AMC	1,10,836
Nippon Life India AMC	74,337
360 ONE WAM	45,362
Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC	30,245

SOURCE: NSE

Setty: SBI not looking at further diluting stake in MF subsidiary

Mumbai: State Bank of India is not looking to dilute its stake further in its asset management arm SBI Funds Management, a top official said on Tuesday. Speaking at the listing ceremony of SBI FM, the largest asset manager in the country, SBI chairman CS Setty said, “At this moment, we are not looking for any more dilution”. He quickly added that

capital markets regulator SEBI's minimum public holding norms will dictate any stake sales from here on.

SBI sold around 6% of its stake in the asset management company as part of the IPO process and now owns over a 55% stake. Its joint venture partner Amundi, a global asset manager, diluted its nearly 4% stake and owns a 32.5% stake. PTI

times its issue size as of the final day of bidding. It had raised Rs 2,663 crore from global powerhouses such as BlackRock and sovereign wealth funds from Norway and Abu Dhabi, as well as Indian names like LIC, ICICI Prudential, and Kotak Mutual Fund. Amundi, SBI's joint venture partner in the company, divested a near 4% stake during the issue. The French financial giant's deputy CEO said it does

not plan to divest any further stake in the asset management company. SBI Chairman also said the bank is not looking for any further dilution. SBI Funds' positive public issue may provide a boost to India's sluggish IPO market so far this year following record deals in 2025, with big issues such as NSE and Reliance Jio lined up for the rest of the year. FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM



IIFL HOME LOAN

IIFL Home Finance Limited

CIN: U65993MH2006PLC166475

Regd. Office -IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park, Road No. 16V, Plot No. B-23, MIDC, Thane Industrial Area, Wagle Estate, Thane-400604, Maharashtra | **Tel:** (91-124) 478 0900
Fax: (91-22) 2580 6654 | **Email:** secretarialhfc@iiflhomeloans.com | **Website:** www.iiflhomeloans.com

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED JUNE 30, 2026

₹ in crores except otherwise stated

S. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended June 30, 2026	Quarter Ended June 30, 2025	Year Ended March 31, 2026
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	987.99	948.62	3,807.61
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the periods / year (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items [#])	237.32	252.90	974.09
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the periods / year before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items [#])	237.32	252.90	974.09
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the periods / year after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items [#])	184.20	197.68	745.81
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the periods / year [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the periods / year (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	219.28	191.73	747.58
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	26.34	26.34	26.34
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve, if any)	8,268.61	7,658.78	8,038.34
8	Securities Premium Account (included in Sl. No.7-Reserves)	2,969.65	2,969.65	2,969.65
9	Net worth	8,294.95	7,685.12	8,064.68
10	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	23,059.17	19,313.75	22,712.67
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
12	Debt Equity Ratio (in-times)	2.78	2.51	2.82
13	Earnings Per Share (of ₹10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) (not annualised for the quarters)			
	• Basic: (₹)	69.92	75.04	283.10
	• Diluted: (₹)	69.25	74.12	280.77
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
15	Debenture Redemption Reserve	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

- Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items adjusted in the Statement of Profit and Loss in accordance with Ind AS Rules/ AS Rules, whichever is applicable.

Note:

- The above unaudited standalone financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2026, have been reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee and subsequently approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at their respective meetings held on July 20, 2026. The Joint Statutory Auditors have carried out the limited review of the aforesaid results and have issued an unmodified conclusion.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2026 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("Listing Regulations"). The full format of the financial results are available on National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE): www.nseindia.com, BSE Limited (BSE): www.bseindia.com and can be accessed on the website of the Company: www.iiflhomeloans.com/investor-relations/financials.
- For the other line items referred in Regulation 52(4) of the Listing Regulations, pertinent disclosures have been made to Stock Exchanges and available on NSE: www.nseindia.com, BSE: www.bseindia.com and can be accessed on the website of the Company: www.iiflhomeloans.com/investor-relations/financials.
- The Accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial results are consistent with those followed in the previous periods /year unless otherwise stated.
- Previous periods / year figures have been regrouped/reclassified wherever necessary to conform to the current period's presentation.

Date: July 20, 2026

Place: Mumbai

By order of the Board
For IIFL Home Finance Limited

Garish Kousgi
Managing Director & CEO

DIN: 08524205

\$314 million tax demand: Pernod drops court case

New Delhi: Pernod Ricard has withdrawn a court challenge against government's demand of \$314 million in back taxes for allegedly undervaluing Scotch whisky imports for years, an order shows, marking a new twist in a four-year investigation. The tax case is a major challenge for the French spirits maker in India, which contributes roughly 10% of the group's worldwide sales and is its biggest market by volume. The dispute comes on top of an antitrust case and a separate ban in New Delhi city that Pernod is contesting over allegations of liquor policy violations, which it denies. Pernod had challenged the

tax demand issued last September, which alleged the company withheld the composition of its whisky imports and the age of the blends, significantly reducing its 150% tariff charges, Reuters reported in May.

Seeking to quash the demand, Pernod argued in a New Delhi court that India had not provided it with investigation data during the probe, which could have helped it defend itself. Pernod, the maker of Chivas Regal whisky and Absolut vodka, has now decided to take the case via the tax authority appeal route, although it was not clear why, nine months after starting a court challenge. REUTERS



From 1991, three foreign policy lessons for managing disruption of certainties



RAJA MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

HISTORICAL ANALOGIES must be approached with caution. Yet there is a striking symmetry between the foreign policy challenges that confronted India in 1990-91 and those now posed by the wars in Iran and Ukraine. Simultaneous upheavals in the Middle East and Europe in 1991 shattered India's economic and strategic assumptions. Today, the two regions are again compelling Delhi to reconsider the foundations of its national strategy.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, and the US-led war to reverse Saddam Hussein's annexation, sent oil prices soaring, disrupted remittances and aggravated India's balance-of-payments crisis. Within months, the Soviet Union — the principal anchor of Indian foreign policy during the Cold War — collapsed. The twin shocks forced India to reform its economy, diversify its international partnerships and rethink its place in the world.

The circumstances today are different, but the underlying challenge is familiar. The war that began with the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader on February 28 has raised energy costs, disrupted navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and exposed India's dependence on the Middle East.

The relief in Delhi after Washington and Tehran signed a memorandum of understanding in June has proved premature as the conflict escalates again. In Europe, meanwhile, the Ukraine war has entered its fifth year without a clear path to settlement. Russia is not about to disintegrate as the Soviet Union did in 1991. But the prolonged war, with its mounting costs, is generating new questions about Russia's future at home and abroad.

India is much better placed to manage these shocks than it was in 1991. It has a larger economy, greater diplomatic weight, and wider international partnerships. Yet its ex-



ILLUSTRATION: C R SASIKUMAR

posure to the world and the resulting vulnerabilities are greater.

American policies are intensifying this vulnerability. The sanctions legislation associated with the late Senator Lindsey Graham is proposing massive punitive tariffs against China, India and others importing Russian oil. President Donald Trump has also called for the legislation to be expanded to cover Iran. Whether or not Congress accepts that proposal, India's energy diplomacy will come under increasing stress.

The Indian government has shown considerable flexibility in navigating these pressures so far; but it could get trickier in the days ahead. As in 1991, however, the government appears more flexible than the foreign policy debate surrounding it might suggest. When Saddam invaded Kuwait, India's official position was caught between competing imperatives. It had to evacuate a large Indian expatriate population, preserve relations with Iraq and the Arab world, respond to the violation of Kuwaiti sovereignty, and accommodate the overwhelming military power assembled by the United States. The government's contradictory manoeuvres — including Foreign Minister I K Gujral's embrace of Saddam and

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, and the US-led war to reverse Saddam Hussein's annexation, sent oil prices soaring, disrupted remittances and aggravated India's balance-of-payments crisis

the provision of refuelling facilities to American military aircraft — reflected these multiple pressures.

But the domestic strategic consensus in 1991 was hardly realistic. Large sections of the political and foreign policy establishment sympathised instinctively with Saddam, long viewed as a friend of India and a representative of secular Arab nationalism. His annexation of an independent country was viewed as less important than his confrontation with the United States.

The same rigidity shaped Indian reactions to the Soviet crisis. By the late 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev's internal reforms and retrenchment abroad had made clear that the old Soviet order was unsustainable. Yet a large section of Delhi's foreign policy community denounced him for seeking accommodation with the West. When communist hardliners attempted a coup in August 1991, there was barely concealed political glee in parts of Delhi. The coup collapsed within three days; the Soviet Union disappeared in December.

The protagonists have changed, but the instinct survives. Sympathy for Tehran often rests less on the character or conduct of the Islamic Republic than on its resistance to

America. Saddam's secular autocracy and Iran's Islamic theocracy are as different as chalk and cheese. Yet, the Indian foreign policy community embraced them both as symbols of anti-American defiance.

The debate on Russia is similarly personalised around Putin and sentimentalised through the memory of Soviet support for India. This obscures the need to examine Russia's internal strains, its changing relationship with China and its imperatives for reconciling with Europe and America. India's interests require an empathetic understanding of the domestic politics of Russia and Iran — not reflexive signalling of solidarity to the governments of the moment.

The first lesson from 1991, therefore, is that no balance of power is permanent. The certainties of the 1980s — a stable Soviet Union, a bipolar order and dependable partnerships — vanished with astonishing speed in 1991. Unpredictability is not an interruption of normal international politics; it is one of its permanent features. Indian strategy must devote as much attention to discontinuity as to continuity.

The second is that debate itself is a strategic asset. A foreign policy community organised around a rigid consensus will repeatedly miss inconvenient possibilities. India needs stronger expertise on Russia, Iran, Central Asia and the internal politics of the Middle East. India needs sustained investment, more than ever, in languages, history and regional specialisation. It also needs institutions willing to reflect on competing scenarios and encourage contrarian judgments.

The third and most important lesson is that external shocks and systemic changes cannot be managed by diplomacy alone. What rescued India after 1991 were the internal reforms. The answer must be the same today — sweeping domestic reform to cope with a changing world. Diplomacy's role then and now is to support internal transformation.

The writer is a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express. He is also a Distinguished Professor at the Motwani-Jadaja Institute of American Studies, Jindal Global University and the Korea Foundation Chair on Asian Geopolitics at the Council for Strategic and Defense Research, Delhi

Delhi's winter pollution toolkit needs AI forecasts



MANMEET SINGH AND SANDEEP JUNEJA

DELHI'S DECISION to introduce a permanent winter pollution management framework marks an important shift in how the city responds to its annual air quality crisis. Measures such as staggered office timings, work-from-home arrangements, construction restrictions and tighter controls on vehicular emissions show that the government is moving from emergency response to advance planning. But one critical question remains: Even if emissions are reduced, when should people go outdoors?

Every winter, Delhi experiences strong temperature inversions that trap pollutants close to the ground, producing some of the world's highest concentrations of fine particulate matter, or PM2.5. Yet millions of schoolchildren, athletes, coaches, outdoor workers and event organisers continue to follow fixed morning schedules rather than atmospheric conditions. Daily Air Quality Index bulletins tell people when the air is "poor" or "severe," but rarely answer the more practical health question: What is the safest time today to be outside?

Our analysis of winter observations from November to January, using data from the Central Pollution Control Board, points to a clear pattern. We compared PM2.5 concentrations during the traditional morning window for school sports and outdoor activities, from 9 am to 12 pm, with those in the late afternoon, from 3 pm to 6 pm, when stronger atmospheric mixing typically helps disperse pollutants. The difference is striking.

At Anand Vihar, average PM2.5 concentrations fall from 275.3 ug/m³ in the morning to 170.4 ug/m³ in the late afternoon, a reduction of 38 per cent. In Rohini, concentrations decline by 40 per cent. R K Puram and Ashok Vihar record reductions of around one-third. Even Lodhi Road, among Delhi's cleaner monitoring locations, sees an average reduction of nearly 29 per cent. Pollution levels between 6 AM and 9 AM, when many training sessions and fitness activities begin, are similarly high to those between 9 AM and noon.

This pattern reflects a familiar feature of Delhi's winter atmosphere. Pollution remains trapped near the surface throughout the morning and often stays elevated into the early afternoon.



ILLUSTRATION: TANUSHRI MITRA

The most consistent improvement occurs later in the day, between 3 pm and 6 pm. For children playing football, hockey, cricket or athletics, this timing matters. During vigorous exercise, breathing rates can rise by up to twenty-fold, allowing fine particulate matter to penetrate deeper into the lungs. A two-hour sporting event can therefore involve far greater pollution exposure than simply standing outdoors. Shifting activity to a cleaner time of day can substantially reduce exposure without requiring new infrastructure or additional regulation.

This is where AI can make Delhi's winter strategy more effective. Historical observations reveal broad patterns, but pollution varies from day to day depending on wind, temperature, cloud cover, regional biomass burning and local emissions. AI models can combine weather forecasts, satellite observations, ground-level monitoring and emissions data to predict how pollution will evolve hour by hour, and increasingly several days in advance.

That can turn air quality forecasting from a general information service into a practical decision-support tool. Instead of issuing only a generic warning that air quality will be "very poor," AI-enabled forecasts can answer operational questions: Should tomorrow's school sports meet begin at 9 AM or shift to 4 PM? Will pollution remain hazardous all day, requiring outdoor activity to be postponed? Which parts of the city are likely to see air quality improve earliest?

Delhi's new winter pollution framework rightly focuses on reducing emissions. AI forecasting would complement those efforts by helping governments, schools and communities reduce exposure while pollution-control measures take effect. With high-quality data, such forecasts could support decisions on school sports, marathons, outdoor work, public events and emergency health advisories. The evidence already supports one simple recommendation: Wherever possible, winter school sports and other outdoor physical activities should be scheduled in the late afternoon, between 3pm and 6pm.

India already uses predictive science to prepare for cyclones, floods and heatwaves. Air pollution should be treated no differently. Delhi has taken an important step by planning ahead to reduce emissions. The next step is to use AI-powered forecasts to help people decide when it is safest to step outside.

Singh is academic visitor and Juneja is director, Safexpress Centre for Data, Learning and Decision Sciences, Ashoka University, Delhi-NCR. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jantar Mantar protest

INDIA'S EXAMINATION ecosystem has witnessed repeated controversies, including paper leaks, impersonation rackets and organised cheating networks, indicating that the problem extends beyond administrative failures to structural weaknesses requiring comprehensive reform ('Can't have sabka vishwas with tear gas and lathi', *IE*, July 21). Equally disturbing are reports of protesters being ignored or dispersed through coercive measures even before avenues for dialogue have been exhausted.

Vaibhav Goyal, Chandigarh

THE REPEATED crossing of red lines by this NDA government will cost it dearly in the years to come ('Can't have sabka vishwas with tear gas and lathi', *IE*, July 21). The high-handed approach to dealing with a sensitive issue related to the aspirations of millions of young people in this country cannot be justified in any manner, even if one accepts all the social media theories promoted by the administration. The delayed, too little, too late action was of no consequence in light of the brutal police action against students and young people, watched in horror by a nation whose foundation was laid on the principles of non-violence and peaceful protest. I hope that good sense will prevail among our political masters.

Sanjeev Raina

Two fasts

THE COMPARISON between the two movements is instructive ('Anna Hazare to Sonam Wangchuk, a tale of two fasts — and a democracy', *IE*, July 21). What separates lasting impact from fleeting attention is often organisation and political timing, rather than the sincerity of the cause. Civil society movements need clearer institutional channels to convert public sentiment into policy action. Legislatures could benefit from formal mechanisms to register and respond to sustained public demands.

SM Jeeva, Chennai



SUPRIYA SANKARAN AND PAVITHRA MANIVANNAN

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE is coming to India's courts, not as a distant possibility but as an active policy question. This June, the Supreme Court published draft regulations for the use of AI in courts for public comments. They govern how AI may be used across the entire judiciary, create institutions to oversee their adoption and prescribe approval processes for AI systems.

But courts are only beginning to use AI, and no one fully understands yet how it will behave in practice. These regulations will need to evolve as experience accumulates.

The more important question, then, is whether the foundations are right. Two things in particular are hard to reverse once set, and will shape the integrity of everything that follows. Both need to be answered before AI enters the courtroom.

The first is about institutions. Every wave of technology use in India's judiciary has created a new governance body. Computerisation brought computer committees. AI is now producing an apex body, five standing committees, High Court AI committees, district AI secretariats, and a new Centre of Research and Excellence.

The problem is architecture. Institutional structures must not be built around individual technologies. Computerisation, digitisation, video conferencing, and AI are

What must a system explain, and to whom? What error rate is acceptable in a bail matter versus a scheduling task? Where does training data come from?

successive tools in the same transformation of court administration. For instance, an AI-assisted scheduling system is simultaneously a case management, infrastructure, digitisation and AI project. If each of these tools and functions has separate committees, it fragments accountability and slows decision-making. The judiciary needs a permanent institution capable of absorbing the functions currently held by the e-Committee alongside the new AI governance mandate, and whatever technology comes next. India has done this before: TNMSC professionalised medicine procurement in Tamil Nadu and became a model for other states; UIDAI built and maintains the Aadhaar ecosystem. Execution requires permanence, expertise and clear ownership — none of which committees with rotating members can provide.

The second is about standards. When India built its payments infrastructure, it made one decision that changed everything: It separated the standard from the market. NPCI wrote the specification for UPI and stepped back. It didn't build PhonePe or Google Pay — the market did. The standard was shared; the innovation happened around it. India's courts are now at a similar inflection point with AI.

The Draft Regulations establish who approves AI systems for court use and how. What they do not establish is what any system must ac-

tually demonstrate to earn that approval. This is not a minor gap. Before a pharmaceutical company can sell a drug in India, its manufacturing process must meet internationally defined quality standards.

For judicial AI, the equivalent is missing. What must a system explain, and to whom? What error rate is acceptable in a bail matter versus a scheduling task? Where does training data come from? Without these answers defined in advance, each of India's 25 high courts must independently determine what constitutes an acceptable AI system. Given the wide variation in technical capacity across the judiciary, they will arrive at different answers. The result is inconsistent approvals — and inconsistent justice.

Standards cannot be set by the body that procures against them. The Draft Regulations already envision a Centre of Research and Excellence on AI (CoRE-AI). It should be set up as a neutral body with no stake in which vendor wins, no procurement budget to defend. A permanent technical institution should procure against them. A judicial Committee should approve them. Just as NPCI stepped back and let the market build, CoRE-AI's value lies precisely in staying out of the game it is refereeing. The SC must push for foundations that will hold not just for today's AI, but for whatever comes next.

Sankaran is a co-founder of PUCAR and Agami. Manivannan is research lead at XKDR Forum

NEET and beyond, a systematic assault on education

and an unprecedented crisis in examinations, recruitment and employment.

The Ministry of Education under Dharmendra Pradhan has failed to restore confidence in this system. Every fresh controversy has deepened public distrust. Thousands of students are on the streets demanding his resignation, including activists sitting on hunger strike for more than two weeks, demanding accountability.

The assault began with India's premier public universities. Jawaharlal Nehru University, the University of Hyderabad, Jamia Millia Islamia, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and several other institutions became targets of political attacks. Students and teachers questioning the government were routinely branded "anti-national", "tukde-tukde gang" or "urban Naxals". This was accompanied by financial pressure on

public education. Universities reported shrinking grants, delays in fellowships, financial constraints and pressure to raise fees.

If the first pillar of the BJP's education policy has been weakening public institutions, the second has been the collapse of credibility in examinations and recruitment. No institution symbolises this collapse more than the National Testing Agency (NTA). Established to bring professionalism and trans-

Pradhan bears ministerial responsibility for the repeated breakdown of India's examination system. The scale of the NEET and NTA crises alone warrants his resignation

parency, the NTA has instead become associated with repeated controversies, technical failures, paper leak allegations, arbitrary examination centre allotments and administrative confusion.

The NEET crisis has become the defining example. In 2024, over 24 lakh candidates registered for the examination. Allegations of paper leaks, the controversial award of grace marks to 1,563 candidates, multiple perfect scores, nationwide protests, a CBI investigation and proceedings before the Supreme Court shattered public confidence in the examination process. Before confidence could be restored, an even bigger crisis unfolded. The NEET-UG 2026 examination, taken by around 22 lakh aspiring doctors, was cancelled after the integrity of the examination was compromised.

Behind every cancelled examination lies

an enormous human cost. Years of preparation, family savings and emotional investment disappear overnight. India has repeatedly witnessed heartbreaking reports of students dying by suicide amid examination stress and recruitment uncertainty. While every such tragedy has multiple causes, together they reflect a system that has become increasingly unforgiving and unpredictable.

Pradhan bears ministerial responsibility for these repeated breakdowns. The scale of the NEET and NTA crises alone warrants his resignation. The struggle, however, is larger than one minister or government. It is about defending education as a public good rather than a marketplace, a constitutional right rather than a privilege, and a means of nation-building rather than ideological control.

The writer is General Secretary, CPI

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Sri Banwari Lal Lohia, son of Late Murlidhar Lohia, aged about 84 years, by religion Hindu, residing at, 3, Clyde Row, Kolkata - 700 022 expired on 10th January, 2025 at Kolkata.

He had executed his Last Will and Testament dated 14th April, 2023 appointing Shri Sanjay Kumar Lohia as Executor.

Any person having any claim, objection or demand against the estate of the above deceased person is hereby required to submit the same in writing with supporting documents within 15 days from publication of this notice at the address below:

Sanjay Kumar Lohia
3, Clyde Row, Kolkata-700 022

If no claim is received within the above period, the estate shall be distributed in accordance with the said Will without further reference.

Sd/-
Sanjay Kumar Lohia
Executor

Date: 22/07/2026
Place: Kolkata

UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

“University of Calcutta invites the e-tender vide Ref. No. (Publishing of the notice for e-tender vide reference no. (E-Tender No.: R/306/26 (2nd call) & Tender ID: 2026_CU_1033206_1), (E-Tender No.: R/304/26 (3rdcall) & Tender ID: 2026_CU_1033488_1), (E-Tender No.: R/13/CT-tender/26-27 & Tender ID: 2026_CU_1033503_1). For details pl. visit wbtenders.gov.in.

My client Smt. Anita Srikant Nath, wife of Srikant Nath, purchased 02 Katha or 3.30 Decmal land Vide Deed No. 060801061 dated on 03/02/2026 A.D.S.R. Janai Hooghly, from Shri Dwijendra Nath Ghosh S/O Late Anukul Ghosh alias Anukul Chandra Ghosh, represented by his attorney Alaur Rahman Mallick S/O Late Abdur Rahman Mallick vide registered Power of Attorney No. 060800309/2026 registered at A.D.S.R. Janai Hooghly, at Mouza Monber, J.L No 101, in R.S. & L.R. Dag No 448 under L.R. Khatian No 404, P.S. Dankuni, Dist. Hooghly. Now she will apply for mutation of the said property in B.L. & L.R.O. Chanditala-I, Hooghly. If the principal or any other person have any objection against the said power of attorney then they submit written objection within one (01) month from the date of publication of this notice before the said concerned office, otherwise legal action will be taken as per law.

Sd/-
RATNA SAMANTA, Advocate
City Civil Court, Kolkata 700 001

E-N.I.T

Tender no.- 02/15th CFCEG(T5)/D.H-II/P.S/26-27, Memo No-300(35)/D.H-II/P.S. Dt.-20/07/2026 have been invited. Contact the office of the u/s and visit www.wbtenders.gov.in for details. Tender ID: 2026_ZPHD_1033377_1 to 5 successfully. Last date of application is 29/07/2026 up to 12.30 Hrs

Sd/-
E.O
Diamond Harbour-II P.S
Sarisha: South 24-Parganas

I am Raju Sekh, address Dankuni Surya Sen Nagar, Dankuni, Hooghly. My actual date of birth is 13/06/1989, as recorded on my Aadhaar, PAN, ration card, and school certificate. But on my passport, number N 677658, as well as on my voter ID and driving license, my date of birth is given as 1-1-1984. By the affidavit of the Honorable Shirampur Court, First Class Judicial Magistrate, on the recent date, I am declaring my actual date of birth as 13-06-1989.

I am Raju Sekh, address Dankuni, Surya Sen Nagar, Dankuni, Hooghly. My son's name is Rohan Sekh. My wife's real name is Doly Bibi. But on my son's passport (number U7173569), his mother's name is listed as Doly Begum instead of Doly Bibi. In an affidavit dated recently from the Honorable Serampore Court, First Class Judicial Magistrate, it has been confirmed that my son's mother, that is my wife, Doly Begum, and Doly Bibi are the same and one identical person.

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-tenders under earning contracts are invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works: [A] No. CE/T/04/2026-27, Date:15.07.2026. SL No.: Tender Nos.: Name of the work: Advertised Value(Rupees): Earnest Money Deposit(Rupees): Period of Completion: Date of Closing are as follows : [01]: Engg-23-2026-27; Cleaning and Fishing right of the Main Lake and Lake near Street No. 1/D in Chittaranjan Township measuring approx. total 421044 Sqm for a period of 05 (Five) years on yearly license basis in CLW/ Chittaranjan Township; ₹ 30,16,328.00; ₹ 60,300.00; 5 Years; 05.08.2026@15:00. [02]: Engg-24-2026-27; Cleaning and Fishing right of the Hospital Road Lake (40460 Sqm), Petrol Pump Road Lake (72840 Sqm) and Lake behind Horticulture Office (36425 Sqm) in Chittaranjan Township measuring approx. total 149725 Sqm for a period of 05 (Five) years on yearly license basis; ₹ 12,29,242.25; ₹ 25,000.00; 5 Years; 05.08.2026@15:00. [03]: Engg-25-2026-27; Cleaning and Fishing Right of Simjuri-Fatehpur Lake in Chittaranjan Township measuring approx. 242807 Sqm for a period of 05 (Five) year on yearly license basis in CLW/ Chittaranjan including provision of Angling; ₹ 18,52,548.00; ₹ 37,000.00; 5 Years; 05.08.2026@15:00. [B] No. CE/T/19/2026-27, Date:18.07.2026. SLNo.: [01]:Tender Nos.: Engg-22-2026-27. Name of the work: Upgradation of ground floor of works office at CLW/ Chittaranjan. Note: Composite tender comprising of Civil Engineering work and Furniture work. Advertised Value (Rupees): ₹ 3,67,45,064.86. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees): ₹ 7,34,900.00. Period of Completion: 7 months. Date of Closing: 08.08.2026@12:00. Note [For both A & B]: Complete details can be seen in the Railways website www.iimps.gov.in & www.clw.indianrailways.gov.in. [02] Contact Number -916340201.

Deputy Chief Engineer/CLW/ Chittaranjan
visit us on:www.facebook.com/clwrailways

SBI

Digital Banking-Consumer, Corporate Centre,9th Floor, Plot No. IT-6 Newa Bhakti Knowledge City, Airoli Knowledge Park, Navi Mumbai - 400 708. E-mail: finance.yono@sbi.co.in; Website: <https://sbi.bank.in/>; <https://etender.sbi/>

NOTICE INVITING RFP (REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL)

RFP No. Ref: SBI/CC/DB-Consumer/I&SP/RFP/2026-27/01

Applications are invited by State Bank of India from eligible Startups, FinTechs & Digital Capability Partners (DCP), for Development, Customization, Integration of VKYC based VVIP Digital Solution (Event ID- 41099).

RFP document will be available on <https://etender.sbi/> from 22.07.2026, 18:00Hrs.

Place: Navi Mumbai Deputy General Manager (Innovation & Spl. Projects)
Date: 22.07.2026 Digital Banking - Consumer

AP POWER GENERATION CORPORATION LIMITED V.S. VIJAYAWADA-520004 (A Govt. of A.P. Undertaking)

NIT No: 610002334

Name of the work: "Engineering, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Auxiliary Power System of Stage-III, Dr. NTTPS" through e-procurement. Schedule available Date & Time : 17.07.2026-18:00 Hrs onwards Bid submission Closing Date & Time: 07.08.2026 -13:00 Hrs. For other details visit website, viz. www.apgcco.gov.in (or) <https://etender.apgcco.gov.in/rfp/portal>. R.No.- 5271PP/Dt: 21.07.2026

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED (Wholly Owned by Government of Karnataka Undertaking) (CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP portal)

BESCOM invites tender for the following Enquiry/Indent No.: **BESCOM/2026-27/EL/ WORK_IDENT1155**. Preventive and Breakdown maintenance of all makes & all configurations of DAS and Non DAS RMUs in BRAZ area of BESCOM on Total Turnkey on Percentage quoting basis. For the above Work: Bid documents will be available from **27-07-2026**. Last Date for submission is **27-08-2026**. Opening of Bids is **28-08-2026 at 17:15 hrs**. The Tender Documents can be obtained through KPP portal website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. Aspiring bidders need to register on KPP portal. Further Bidders can take assistance with KPPP help desk contact numbers (080-46010000, 080-68948777) or email at support@eprochelpdesk.com. Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

Sd/-
Chief General Manager(Elc.,) Procurement, BESCOM

For electricity related complaints Call: 1912
Download BESCOM Mithra Mobile APP

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India

CHANDANNAGAR BRANCH
Bina Complex, Ground Floor, Chandannagar
Khalasani Ditch Road, Hooghly - 712136,
Email: Ubin0574163@Unionbankofindia.Bank.in

DEMAND NOTICE

UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF SARFAESI ACT 2002 FOR ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST

Ref : RO:HHW:0574163:13(2):05:26:KG Date: 20.05.2026

To : Borrower / Co-Applicant/ Mortgageor

1. Mr. Kousik Ghosh,
S/o. Mr. Nilkantha Ghosh of North West Corner Flat, Type 'C', 3rd Floor, G. B. Residency, Ram Mandir Tala P. O. - Chinsurah (R.S.), P. S. - Chinsurah, District - Hooghly, Pin - 712102.

2. Mrs. Rama Manna
W/o. Kousik Ghosh, of North West Corner Flat, Type 'C', 3rd Floor, G. B. Residency, Ram Mandir Tala P. O. - Chinsurah (R.S.), P. S. - Chinsurah, District - Hooghly, Pin - 712102.

Sir/Madam,
Notice Under Section 13(2) read with Section 13(3) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

You the addressees herein have availed the following credit facilities from our Chandannagar Branch and failed to pay the dues/installment/ interest / operate the accounts satisfactorily and hence, in terms of the RBI guidelines as to the Income Recognition and Prudential Accounting Norms, your account/s has/have been classified as **Non-Performing Asset** as on **10.04.2026**. As on **20.05.2026** a sum of **Rs. 8,78,808.98** (Rupees Eight Lakh Seventy Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Eight and Paise Ninety Eight Only) outstanding in your account/s together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank. The particulars of amount due to the Bank from you as on **20.05.2026** in respect of the following account/s are as under :

Facility & Account Number	Limit	Outstanding Amount	Remaining Expenses Amount	Remaining URI	Remaining Dummy Amount	Total Dues as on 20.05.2026
TLU15 UNION HOME FLOATING RATE 74160650000010	Rs. 10,00,000.00	Rs. 8,49,390.00	Rs.0.00	Rs. 25,153.98	Rs. 4,265.00	Rs. 8,78,808.98

TOTAL DUES : Rs. 8,78,808.98 (Rupees Eight Lakh Seventy Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Eight and Paise Ninety Eight Only) as on **20.05.2026** together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank.

To secure the repayment of the monies due or the monies that may become due to the Bank, Mr. Kousik Ghosh and Mrs. Rama Manna had executed documents and created security interest by way of Mortgage of immovable property described herein below :

All that one North West corner residential Flat being Type 'C' at the Third Floor consisting of 1 Bedroom, 1 Dining / Kitchen, 1 Bath and 1 Verandah, measuring super built up area of 408.58 sq. ft. more or less, the floor of the said Flat is made of tile, having undivided impartible proportionate share in the land and/or common facilities of the Ground plus Three storied building namely G. B. RESIDENCY, without any Lift facility, situated at R. S. Dag No. 1778, corresponding to L. R. Dag No. 1877, pertaining to L. R. Khatian Nos. 3157, 4647 & 4646, J. L. No. 16, Mouza- Simla, Ram Mandiratala, P. O. - Chinsurah (R. S.), P. S. - Chinsurah, District - Hooghly, Pin - 712102, under Kodalia-I Gram Panchayet and the building is bounded by - On the North : 12'-0" wide Common Passage, On the South : House of Mukti Chanda, On the East : House of Tapan Ghosh, On the West : House of Debashish Mukherjee.

(The Flat belonging to Mr. Kousik Ghosh and Mrs. Rama Manna vide Registered Deed of Sale No. I-86 of 2017 registered before A.D.S.R Chinsurah) (CERSAI Security ID : 400018762182, Asset ID : 200018720477)

Therefore, You, are hereby called upon in terms of section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, to pay a sum of **Rs. 8,78,808.98** (Rupees Eight Lakh Seventy Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Eight and Paise Ninety Eight Only) as on **20.05.2026** with further interest and charges at the contractual rate as per the terms and conditions of loan documents executed by you and discharge your liabilities in full within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice, failing which, we shall be constrained to enforce the aforesaid securities by exercising any or all of the rights given under the said Act.

As per section 13 (13) of the Act, on receipt of this notice you are restrained /prevented from disposing of or dealing with the above securities without the consent of the bank.

Your attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Date : 20/05/2026 Date of Publication : 22.07.2026 Yours Faithfully
Place : Howrah Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India

RAMESHWARPUR BRANCH
Village & P. O. - Rameshwarpur
P. S. - Pandua, District - Hooghly, West Bengal
E-mail : ubin0542989@unionbankofindia.Bank.in

DEMAND NOTICE

UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF SARFAESI ACT 2002 FOR ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST

Ref : RO:HHW:542989:13(2):05:26:SSM Date : 21/05/2026

To : Borrower(s)/ Co-Applicant(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgageor(s)

1. Sanatan Shopping Mall, Reepresented by its partners Mr. Jaydev Sanatan Karmakar & Mr. Anil Sanatan Karmakar of Village & Post - Bhastara, District - Hooghly, Pin - 712149.

2. Mr. Jaydev Sanatan Karmakar, S/o. Sanatan Surendranath Karmakar Mr. Anil Sanatan Karmakar, S/o. Sanatan Karmakar

Sir/Madam,
Notice Under Section 13(2) read with Section 13(3) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

You the addressees herein have availed the following credit facilities from our Rameswarpur Branch and failed to pay the dues / installment / interest / operate the accounts satisfactorily and hence, in terms of the RBI guidelines as to the Income Recognition and Prudential Accounting Norms, your account/s has / have been classified as **Non-Performing Asset** as on **22.04.2026**. As on **05.05.2026** a sum of **Rs. 66,80,786.85** (Rupees Sixty Six Lakhs Eighty Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Six and Paise Eighty Five Only) outstanding in your account/s together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank.

The particulars of amount due to the Bank from you as on **05.05.2026** in respect of the following account/s are as under :

Facility & Account Number	Limit	Outstanding Amount	Remaining Expenses Amount	Remaining URI	Remaining Dummy Amount	Total Dues as on 05.05.2026
CC -- GENERAL 429805010001204	Rs. 65,00,000.00	Rs. 65,91,743.85	Rs. 0.00	Rs. 30,500.00	Rs. 58,543.00	Rs. 66,80,786.85

TOTAL DUES: Rs. 66,80,786.85 (Rupees Sixty Six Lakhs Eighty Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Six and Paise Eighty Five Only) as on **05.05.2026** together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank.

To secure the repayment of the monies due or the monies that may become due to the Bank, Mr. Anil Sanatan Karmakar & Mr. Jaydev Sanatan Karmakar had deposited security documents and created security interest by way of :

Mortgage of immovable property described herein below :

All that piece and parcel of land measuring about 47 Satak (22+10+15) along with a G+II storied shopping mall building lying and situated at Mouza - Bhastara, J. L. No. 153, R. S. Khatian No. 488, R. S. & L. R. Dag No. 3343, L. R. Khatian No. 647, New L. R. Khatian Nos. 1723, 1724, under the local limits of Bhastara Gram Panchayet, P. S. - Gurup, A.D.S.R.- Dhanialkhat, District - Hooghly belonging to Mr. Anil Sanatan Karmakar & Mr. Jaydev Sanatan Karmakar vide Deed No. 602 dated 13.02.2003 & Deed No. 1943 dated 23.05.2013 and the property is bounded by:

Boundry of Land 22 Satak : North- Another Plot of land, South - Land of R. S. Dag No. 3325/3326 thereafter Rasta, East- Land of R. S. Dag No. 3342, West - Land of R.S. Dag No. 3346.

Boundry of Land 10 Satak : North - Land of R. S. Dag No. 3345, 3442, 3441, South - Land of Joydeb Karmakar, East- Land of R. S. Dag No. 3342, West - Land of R.S. Dag No. 3345.

Boundry of Land 15 Satak : North - Another Plot of Land, South - Another Plot of Land, East - Land of R. S. Dag No. 3342, West - Land of R. S. Dag No. 3346.

Therefore, You, are hereby called upon in terms of section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, to pay a sum of : **Rs. 66,80,786.85** (Rupees Sixty Six Lakhs Eighty Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Six and Paise Eighty Five Only) as on **05.05.2026** together with further interest and charges at the contractual rate as per the terms and conditions of loan documents executed by you and discharge your liabilities in full within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice, failing which, we shall be constrained to enforce the aforesaid securities by exercising any or all of the rights given under the said Act.

As per section 13 (13) of the Act, on receipt of this notice you are restrained / prevented from disposing of or dealing with the above securities without the consent of the bank.

Your attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Date : 21/05/2026 Date of Publication : 22.07.2026 Yours Faithfully
Place : Howrah Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India

बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda

REGIONAL OFFICE: BURDWAN REGION
2nd Floor, 54, G. T. Road
Bhangakuthi, Burdwan- 713101

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

ANNEXURE-A

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES ; “APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to Rule 9 (1)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Mortgageor's and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on “As is where is”, “As is what is”, and “Whatever there is” for recovery of below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower/s / Mortgageor / Guarantor/s / Secured Asset/s/Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below:—

Sr/ Lot No.	Name & address of Borrower/s/Guarantor/ s / Mortgageor (s)	Detailed description of the immovable / movable property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues.	Date & Time of E-auction	Reserve Price EMD amount Bid Increase Amount	Status of Possession (Constructive /Physical)	Property Inspection date & Time
1	1. Mr. Biman Ghosh, Address 1. Sukhsagar Apartmen, Flat No. 4, 1st Floor, Block C, Keranitola Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur- 721260, West Bengal, India. Address 2: Vill- Uparkuai, PO-Neradeul, PS-Keshpur Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur-721260, West Bengal, India Branch: MEDINIPUR Authorised Officer: Mr. Arvind Kumar Contact person of the branch : Mr. Arvind Kumar, Mob: 9979347723	Equitable mortgage of property situated at District- Paschim Medinipur PS, ADSRO & municipality Midnapore Ward No. 6, holding No 1533, Mouza Sekhpura, JL No 172, RS Khatian No 120, present LR Khatian No 494, RS plot No 76, LR plot No 172(p) total area 0.4525 acres in which 0.0502 acres for common passage Bastu Land. Being Flat No. “3” Block D, on the 4th Floor, North West Side, Super Build Up area 701.50 sq.ft. in the aforesaid premises known as “SUKGSAGAR” apartment in the name of Mr. Biman Ghosh vide sale deed No. I-003-00293/2020 dated 28.01.2020 Boundary Description : East : Common Entrance Road, West :Land of Amilata Pahari, North :VTT College, South : 16 ft Wide Common Road & Land of Mrimnoy Sarkar & Dipak Diri	Rs. 20,20,379.79 as on 20.07.2026 plus further interest and other charges w.e.f 21.07.2026	25.08.2026 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m	Rs 19,15,500.00 Rs 1,91,550.00 Rs 5000.00	Symbolic	any working day from 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer/link to the websites link <https://www.bankofbaroda.bank.in/e-auction.htm> and online auction portal <https://baanknet.com> Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorized officer on Mobile

1. The sale is subject to confirmation by the Secured Creditor Bank.

2. Property is in Symbolic Possession and Bidder is purchasing the property in symbolic possession at his/own risk & responsibility.

3. Bank will hand over the possession of property symbolically only and successful Auction bidder/purchaser will not claim physical possession from the bank.

4. Bank will not be responsible or duty bound for handing over of physical possession.

5. Successful Auction purchaser will not been titled to claim any interest, in any case of return of money.

6. Successful Auction purchaser has to submit the Declaration Cum Undertaking confirming the above terms & conditions immediately after e-Auction.

7. Subsequent to sale if successful bidder fails to submit Declaration Cum Undertaking, the Bid EMD amount will be forfeited.

Date: 22.07.2026
Place :- Burdwan

For detailed terms and conditions



Authorised Officer
Bank of Baroda

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
KATAKA (R&B) CIRCLE, KATAKA
E-mail: ID-sectcrb_2006@yahoo.co.in
Tel/Fax-0671-2301751/2302751

(‘E’ - PROCUREMENT NOTICE)

Bid Identification No.CCE.Ctc(R&B) 6/2026-27

1. The Chief Construction Engineer, Kataka (R&B) Circle, Kataka on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites on Percentage rate basis bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Road and Building works as mentioned below.

2. No. of work :- 04 Nos.

3. Nature of work :- Road and Building works

4. Class of contractor :- 'B', 'A' & Special Class

5. Tender paper cost :- Rs.10000/- (online)

6. Availability of bid document in the web site. :- From 30.07/2026 to 17.30 Hours of 13.08.2026

7. Date of opening of bid :- Dt.14.08.2026 at 11.00 Hours.

8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said web site

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Kataka(R&B)Circle

OIPR-34001/34012/1/26-27/0021

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT) No.2 (CIVIL WORKS) OF 2026-2027

On behalf of Samagra Shiksha, Mizoram, the State Project Director invites bid in two-envelope system from empanelled firm under Finance Department, Government of Mizoram.

Tender Document can be viewed and downloaded from the department website www.samagra.mizoram.gov.in and <https://tender.mizoram.gov.in>. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the Office of The State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha Mizoram, Fourth Floor, School Education Complex, Zarkawt, Aizawl. (Tel: 0389-2306951) during office hours from 22nd July to 20th August 2026. Bidders obtaining Tender Document from the mentioned website, should pay for the cost of Tender Document upon submission of the Bid.

Sd/ C.LALTHANZIRA
State Project Director
Samagra Shiksha, Mizoram

IPR No 134

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank
(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)

Stressed Asset Management Branch, Kolkata, United Tower, 3rd Floor, 11 Hemanta Basu Sarani, Kolkata-700001
E-mail: zs8350@pnb.bank.in, Mob: 94330 43490

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/Secured Creditor, will be sold on “As is where is basis”, “As is what is basis”, and “Whatever there is basis” on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

SCHEDULE OF THE SECURED ASSETS

Sl. No.	A) Name of the Branch B) Name of the Account C) Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors Account	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/ Owner's Name (mortgagers of property(ies))	A) Dt. Of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 B) Outstanding Amount as on date of sale C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 D) Nature of Possession Symbolic/Physical Constructive	A) Reserve Price (In ₹) B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount	Date/ Time of E-Auction Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
1.	SAMB, Kolkata Zigma Chemicals Lipi Acherjee (Proprietor of Zigma Chemicals) Unit Address: Chittaranjan Road, Neamatpur, P.O. Village – Sitarampur, Amdiha, Dist.: Paschim Bardhaman, WB-713360	Registered Mortgage deed no I 4073/2024 dated 22.05.2024 of Land & Building in the name of Lipi Acherjee D/o Samir Kumar Ghosal situated at Vill – Bhaskajuri, PO & PS – Baraboni, Under Baraboni Gram Panchayat, Dist- Paschim Bardhaman, West Bengal- 713315, JL No- 42, Upon RS & LR Plot No- 20,21,22, LR Khatian no 530 measuring area 130 decimal of land by virtue of registered sale deed no -I-0205-07777/2019 dated 13.09.2019. Area - 130 decimal, Owner- Mrs. Lipi Acherjee. Boundaries for property mentioned above : North - By the lands of Plot No 19/827, South:- By the 20 Ft wide Road, East - By the lands of Plot No 20(P), 21(P), 22(P), West - By the lands of Plot No 20(P), 21(P), 22(P).	A) 20.08.2025 B) ₹ 29,35,00,165.71 (Rupees Twenty-Nine Crores Thirty-Five Lakhs One Hundred Sixty-Five Rupees and Seventy-One Paise) as on 19.08.2025 with further interest, other charges and legal expenses w.e.f. 20.08.2025 until payment in full. c) 01.11.2025 d) Under Symbolic Possession	A) ₹ 30,05,00,000.00 (Rupees Thirty Crore Five Lakh Only) B) ₹ 3,00,50,000.00 (Rupees Three Crore Fifty Thousand Only) C) ₹ 5.00 Lakh	24.08.2026 between 11.00 AM to 03.00 PM Not known to bank
2.	Regd. Office: Registered Address: Room No. 10, 7th Floor, Gate No.2, Poddar Court, 61 Rabindra Sarani, Kolkata-700001 Lipi Acherjee (Proprietor & Guarantor) Sanjay Acherjee (Guarantor) Ananya Dey (Guarantor) Acherjee Mansion, Litheria Road, P.O. – Sundarchak, Neamatpur, Paschim Bardhaman, WB-713360 Chittaranjan Road, Neamatpur, P.O. Village – Sitarampur, Amdiha, Dist.: West Burdwan, West Bengal- 713360 Ananya Dey (Guarantor) Flat No.-7B, Genex Exotica, Tower No.-1 Kumarpur, Opp. Evelyn Lodge Assansol Municipal Corporation, Paschim Bardhaman, WB-713304	Registered Mortgage deed no I 4073/2024 dated 22.05.2024 of factory land under deed no. I-7776/2019 in the name of Smt. Ananya Dey D/o Sh. Anup Bhowmik at J.L. No. 42, LR Khatian No. 532, RS/LR Plot No. 20,21,22, Mouza- Bhaskajuri, P.S.- Barabani, under Barabani gram Panchayat, Paschim Bardhaman measuring area 126 decimal of land by virtue of registered sale deed no- I-0205-07776/2019 dated 13.09.2019. Area- 126 Decimal. Owner- Smt. Ananya Dey. Boundaries for property mentioned above : North - By the lands of Plot No 19/827, South - By the 20 Ft wide Road, East - By the lands of Plot No 20(P), 21(P), 22(P), West - By the lands of Plot No. 20(P), 21(P), 22(P). Along with hypothecated Plant & Machinery and other movable and fixed assets of the company installed there on.	c) 01.11.2025 d) Under Symbolic Possession	A) ₹ 6,28,00,000.00 (Rupees Six Crore Twenty Eight Lakh Only) B) ₹ 62,80,000.00 (Rupees Sixty Two Lakh Eighty Thousand Only) C) ₹ 5.00 Lakh	

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF E-AUCTION SALE

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions:

1. The properties are being sold on “AS IS WHERE IS BASIS” and “AS IS WHAT IS BASIS” and “WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS”.

2. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule herein above have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.

3. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://baanknet.com> on 24.08.2026 between 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

4. For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer <https://baanknet.com> & www.pnbindia.in.

Place: Kolkata
Date: 20.07.2026

Sd/- Authorised Officer,
Punjab National Bank, Secured Creditor

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

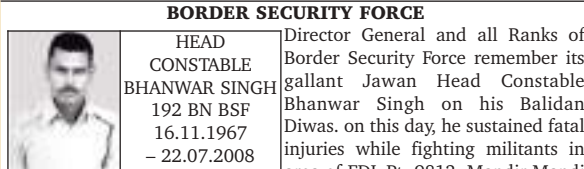
SALUTE THE SOLDIER

ASSAM RIFLE

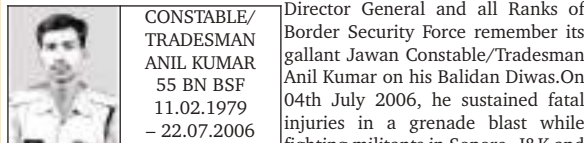


The Tagra Teyees family proudly remembers its Bravehearts who in the true traditions of the Assam Rifles made supreme sacrifice while bravely combating terrorists in Puneja, Doda District, (J&K) on 22nd July 1995. May the Almighty grant eternal peace to their soul. Their gallant action will continue to inspire us all.

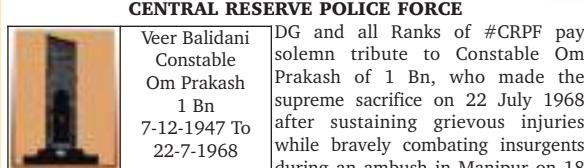
DEEPLY REMEMBERED BY COMMANDANT & ALL RANKS 23 ASSAM RIFLES 'TAGRA TEYEES'



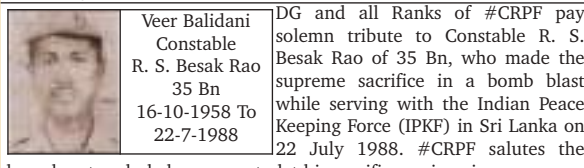
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Head Constable Bhanwar Singh on his Balidan Divas, on this day, he sustained fatal injuries while fighting militants in area of FDL Pt. 9813, Mandir Mandi (J&K) and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.



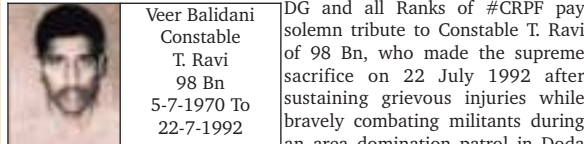
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable/Tradesman Anil Kumar on his Balidan Divas. On 04th July 2006, he sustained fatal injuries in a grenade blast while fighting militants in Sopore, J&K and later succumbed to his injuries at 92 base hospital on 22nd July 2006.



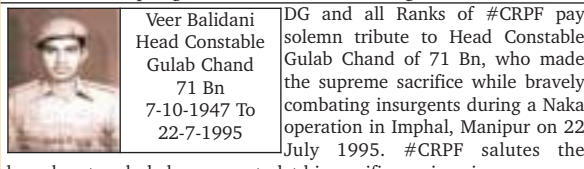
DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Om Prakash of 1 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice on 22 July 1968 after sustaining grievous injuries while bravely combating insurgents during an ambush in Manipur on 18 July 1968. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable R. S. Besak Rao of 35 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice in a bomb blast while serving with the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka on 22 July 1988. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



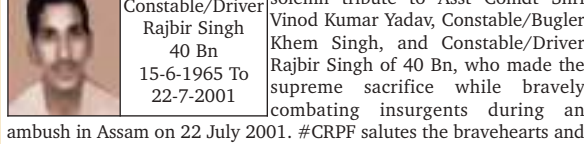
DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable T. Ravi of 98 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice on 22 July 1992 after sustaining grievous injuries while bravely combating militants during an area domination patrol in Doda district, Jammu & Kashmir on 18 July 1992. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



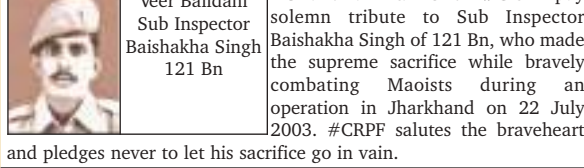
DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Head Constable Gulab Chand of 71 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while bravely combating insurgents during a Naka operation in Imphal, Manipur on 22 July 1995. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Asst Comdt Shri Vinod Kumar Yadav, Constable/Bugler Khem Singh, and Constable/Driver Rajbir Singh of 40 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while bravely combating insurgents during an ambush in Assam on 22 July 2001. #CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Sub Inspector Baishakha Singh of 121 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while bravely combating Maoists during an operation in Jharkhand on 22 July 2003. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.



ITBP salutes its braveheart Head Constable Madan Lal of 25th Battalion, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty fighting bravely with the militants on this day in (J&K) in 2004.

INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE (ITBP)

Head Constable Madan Lal

ITBP salutes its braveheart Head Constable Madan Lal of 25th Battalion, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty fighting bravely with the militants on this day in (J&K) in 2004.

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Chola
Enter a better life

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED

CORPORATE OFFICE :
"CHOLA CREST", C54 & 55, Super B-4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, India

REGIONAL OFFICE : 55 & 55/1, Chowringhee Road, 4th Floor, Chowringhee Court
Opp. Nehru Chindren's Museum in Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata - 700 071, W.B.

**E-AUCTION
SALE
NOTICE**

E-auction Sale Notice for the Sale of Immovable Assets under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with Proviso to under (Rule 8 & 9), r/w Rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and particular to the Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee / Mortgagee of the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the **Symbolic / Physical Possession** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited**, the same shall be referred herein after as **Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited**. The Secured Assets will be auctioned on **12.08.2026** on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis through E-auction.

It is hereby informed to the public that we are to conduct public E-Auction through website <https://bankauctions.in/> & <https://cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notices>

Sl. No.	Account No. and Name of the Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee	Date & Amount as per Demand Notice U/s. 13(2)	Description of the Secured Assets (Immovable Property)	a) Reserve Price (RP) b) Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) c) Bld Increment Amt.	a) E-Auction Date and Time b) EMD Submission Last Date c) Inspection Date d) Date of Possession (Status of Possession)
1.	Loan A/c. No. : HE01BKU00000040541 Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Manas Mukherjee (Applicant) Sonamukhi, Ward No. 2, P.O. and P.S. - Sonamukhi, Dist - Bankura, West Bengal, Pin - 722 207. 2. Bishnu Mukherjee (Co-applicant) Nursinghom, Sonamukhi M, Bankura, West Bengal, Pin - 722207. 3. Shubhra Mukherjee (Co-applicant) Sonamukhi, Ward No. 2, P.O. and P.S. - Sonamukhi, District - Bankura, West Bengal, Pin - 722 207. 4. M/s. Srinibas Nursing Home (Co-applicant) 456, Sonamukhi, Bankura, West Bengal, Pin - 722 207.	05.08.2025 Rs. 49,22,655.00 as on 05.08.2025	All that piece and parcel Land measuring 9.40 Decimals in R.S and LR Plot No. 245, LR Khatian No. 1558, J.L. No. 85, Toudi Mouza - Sonamukhi, P.S. - Sonamukhi, Dist - Bankura along with Building and Structure in or upon the above land of area 2135 Sq.ft. under Sonamukhi Municipality Ward No. 2, Holding No. AN/874, Which is butted and bounded as under : On the North by : Vacate land of donor, On the South by : Bastu of Onkar Gayen, On the East By : Vacate land of Donor, On the West by : 10 Ft. wide Road and Vacate land of Donor.	a) Rs. 48,00,000.00 b) Rs. 4,80,000.00 c) Rs. 25,000.00	a) 12.08.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 3 minutes) b) 11.08.2026 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 04.08.2026 & 05.08.2026 (10.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) d) 28.10.2025 (Symbolic Possession)
2.	Loan A/c. No. : HE01KSN00000020989 Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Alok Roy (Applicant) 2. Sayan Roy (Co-applicant) 3. Lipika Roy (Co-applicant) All are at : 41, Prachin Mayapur 6 Lane, Motisahar, Math Prachinmayapur, Ward 6, Nabadwip, Nadia, West Bengal, Pin - 741 302. 4. M/s. Needs (Co-applicant) 6, Arat Ghat Road, Ward No. 8, Nabadwip, Nadia, West Bengal, Pin - 741 302.	07.10.2025 Rs. 20,26,561.00 as on 07.10.2025	All that piece and parcel of Land measuring 4 Sataks along with residential structure standing thereon comprised within J.L. No. 5, Touji No. 6, Mouja - Rudrapara, R.S. & L.R. Dag No. 990/7836 & 5824, R.S. & L.R. Khatian No. 229 & 6531, 6530, P.S. - Nabadwip, under Ward No. 6 of Nabadwip Municipality, situated within 41, Prachin Mayapur 6th Lane, Nadia, Pin - 741 302 along with easement right butted and bounded : By North : Municipal Road, By South : Property of shibu Pal, By East : Property of Pankaj Roy and By West : Property of Kallipada Pal. It is also notified that Case No. SA/261/2026 pending in Kolkata DRT - II whereas there is "No Interim / Permanent Stay" regarding this Auction as on date.	a) Rs. 18,50,000.00 b) Rs. 1,85,000.00 c) Rs. 10,000.00	a) 12.08.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 3 minutes) b) 11.08.2026 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 04.08.2026 & 05.08.2026 (10.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) d) 05.01.2026 (Symbolic Possession)
3.	Loan A/c. No. : HE01MRS00000076165 Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Matdur Rahaman Sk. (Applicant) C/o. Anower Hossain 2. Khushina Bibi (Co-applicant), C/o. Motiur Rahaman 3. M/s. Rahaman Furniture (Co-applicant) All are at : Barakhana, Khanpur, Near Barakhana High School, Murshidabad, Jagaji, West Bengal, Pin - 742 164.	07.10.2025 Rs. 21,84,259.00 as on 07.10.2025	All that piece and Parcel of Land measuring 4.125 Decimal with structure comprised under Mouza-39 Khanpur, R.S. & L.R. Dag No. 1070 & 1137 corresponding to R.S. & L.R. Khatian No. 117 & 3963 within Rasadpur Gram Panchayat, P.S. Murshidabad, Dist. Murshidabad, West Bengal, Pin - 742 164, butted and bounded : By North : Property of Jahangir Sekh, By South : Property of Khalilur Rahaman Sk, By East : Property of Funu Bibi and By West : 8 Feet wide Kutchha Road.	a) Rs. 25,00,000.00 b) Rs. 2,50,000.00 c) Rs. 10,000.00	a) 12.08.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 3 minutes) b) 11.08.2026 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 04.08.2026 & 05.08.2026 (10.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) d) 22.06.2026 (Physical Possession)
4.	Loan A/c. No. : HE01UKM000000064756 Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Sk. Hasibur (Applicant) Bachhipur, P.O. & P.S. - Bhagabanpur, Purba Medinipore, West Bengal, Pin - 721 601. 2. Arslada Bibi (Co-applicant), Bachhipur, P.O. & P.S. Bhagabanpur, Purba Medinipore, West Bengal, Pin - 721 601. 3. M/s. Human Hair (Co-applicant), VII - Bachhipur Para Sek Para, P.S. - and P.O. - Bhagabanpur, East Midnapore, West Bengal, Pin - 721 601.	05.08.2025 Rs. 29,62,877.00 as on 05.08.2025	All that piece and parcel of Land measuring 8 Decimals, lying and situated at Mouza - Durgapur comprised in J.L. No. 76, R.S. Khatian No. 138, R.S. & L.R. Dag Nos. 97 & 97/446, P.S. - Bhagabanpur, District - Purba Medinipore, within the ambit of Bhagabanpur Gram Panchayat. It is also notified that Case No. SA/513/2026 pending in DRT - II, Kolkata, whereas there is "No Interim / Permanent Stay" regarding this Auction as on date.	a) Rs. 28,50,000.00 b) Rs. 2,85,000.00 c) Rs. 25,000.00	a) 12.08.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 3 minutes) b) 11.08.2026 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 04.08.2026 & 05.08.2026 (10.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) d) 07.11.2025 (Symbolic Possession)
5.	Loan A/c. No. : ML01ASA000000064650 Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Rajkaj Mondal (Applicant), VIII - Sherpur, Para - Sherpur, P.S. - Gopal Nagar, P.O. - Rampur, Bhatpara, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, Pin - 743 249. 2. Rajkaj Mondal (Co-applicant), VIII - Sherpur, Para - Sherpur, P.S. - Gopal Nagar, P.O. - Rampur, Bhatpara, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, Pin - 743 249. 3. Tachalima Bibi (Co-applicant) VIII - Sherpur, Para - Sherpur, P.S. - Gopal Nagar, P.O. - Rampur, Bhatpara, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, Pin - 743 249.	10.04.2025 Rs. 20,92,821.00 as on 10.04.2025	All that plot of Land measuring about 5.34 Decimal forming part of RS and LR Dag No. 1775, LR Khatian 1252, Mouza-Sherpur, J.L. No. 140, P.S.-Gopalnagar, ADNR - Bongaon within the limits of Choubhera-2 Gram Panchayet in District - North 24 Parganas, having following Boundaries of : North - 6 Ft. Common Passage & Property of Arsal Mondal, South - Property of Niljam Mondal, East-Property of Rajkaj Mondal, West - Property of Noor Islam Mondal. It is also notified that Case No. SA/505/2026 pending in DRT - II, Kolkata, whereas there is "No Interim / Permanent Stay" regarding this Auction as on date.	a) Rs. 20,00,000.00 b) Rs. 2,00,000.00 c) Rs. 10,000.00	a) 12.08.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 3 minutes) b) 11.08.2026 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 04.08.2026 & 05.08.2026 (10.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) d) 02.07.2026 (Physical Possession)
6.	Loan A/c. No. : ML01ASA000000092728 Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Somnath Biswas (Applicant), Rudrapur, Baduria (M), Baduria, North 24 Parganas, Pin - 743 401. 2. M/s. Yummy Cafe (Co-applicant) No. 2/2, Rudrapur, Baduria (M), Baduria, Ward No. 17, North 24 Parganas, Pin - 743 401. 3. Piyali Biswas (Co-applicant), Rudrapur, Baduria (M), Baduria, North 24 Parganas, Pin - 743 401.	04.07.2025 Rs. 20,52,304.00 as on 04.07.2025	All that piece and parcel of Land measuring 13 Decimals be the same little more or less, lying and situated at Mouza-Magurkhali, comprised in RS Dag No. Corresponding to LR Dag No. 300, J.L. No. 44, corresponding to Khatian No. 772, P.S. - Baduria, A.D.S.R.-Baduria, within the limits of Baduria Municipality in the District - North 24 Parganas, Pin - 743 401, having following Boundaries: North By : Mahadev Bachar, South By : Monti Mondal, East By : Gopal Choudhury, West By : Sridham Mistry.	a) Rs. 19,00,000.00 b) Rs. 1,90,000.00 c) Rs. 10,000.00	a) 12.08.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 3 minutes) b) 11.08.2026 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 04.08.2026 & 05.08.2026 (10.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) d) 12.09.2025 (Symbolic Possession)
7.	Loan A/c. No. : X0HEGLK00001718307 Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Dhananidhar Eshore (Applicant) 8/13B, Praburam Sarkar Lane, Police Station - Tangra, Kolkata - 700 015. 2. Sumita Barman (Co-applicant) 8/13B, Praburam Sarkar Lane, P.S. - Tangra, Kolkata - 700015.	14.11.2024 Rs. 20,94,898.00 as on 14.11.2024	All that self contained residential Flat having super built up area of 456 Sq.ft. More or less on the South-West side together with undivided proportionate share of land measuring 1 Goltan 9 Chittaks 19 Sq.ft. be the same a little more or less and being Premises No. 8/8A, Praburam Sarkar Lane, Police Station - Tangra, Ward No. 58 of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Kolkata - 700 015, butted and bounded in the manner as follows : On the North - By Premises No. 9, Praburam Sarkar Lane, On the South-By 20 ft wide Common Passage (public Road), On the East - By Premises No. 8/7, Praburam Sarkar Lane, On the West - By Premises No. 8/8, Praburam Sarkar Lane.	a) Rs. 15,00,000.00 b) Rs. 1,50,000.00 c) Rs. 10,000.00	a) 12.08.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 3 minutes) b) 11.08.2026 (up to 5.00 P.M.) c) 04.08.2026 & 05.08.2026 (10.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) d) 23.06.2025 (Physical Possession)

1. All interested participants / bidders are requested to **Contact Mr. Prakash Verma (Authorised Officer) : Mob. No. 98813 43191 & Mr. Subhrajanshu Rakshit, Mob. No. 96744 58555 and visit the Website <https://bankauctions.in/> & <https://cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notices>.** For details and support, prospective bidders may Contact - **Mr. Muhammed Rahees - 81240 00030 / 63748 45616.**
E-mail ID : CholaAuctionLAP@chola.murugappa.com For e-Auction training alone, Contact : **M/s. dCloseure; Rekha - 81420 00062.**

2. For further details on terms and conditions please visit <https://bankauctions.in/> & <https://cholamandalam.com/news/auction-notices> to take part in E-auction.

THIS IS ALSO A STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 9(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT RULES 2002)

Date : 22.07.2026
Place : Kolkata (West Bengal)

Authorised Officer
Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Dy. CEE(W)/KGPW invites e-tender for Electrical works, as per details furnished below:-
e-Tender Notice No.: e-83-DYCEEKGPW-CTRB-26-27; Name of the Work : Augmentation of CTRB POH Capacity from 3500 to 5500 at Kharagpur Workshop; **Approx. Cost of Work:** ₹ 4,87,924.60; **Earnest Money:** ₹ 9,800; The bid closing date and time of the e-tender is on **20/08/2026 at 15.00 hrs** and opening of the tender evaluation will be done on **20/08/2026** after 15.30 hrs. Interested Tenderer may visit website www.ireps.gov.in for full details / description / specification of the tender and submit their bid online. In no case, manual tenders for this work will be accepted.
(PR-498)

ANDHRA PRADESH MEDICAL SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

2nd Floor, Plot No.9, Survey No.49, IT Park, Mangalagiri - 522 503
email: aphmhc@gmail.com & ed.apsmhc16@gmail.com

Tender Notice No.1/APMSIDC/2026-27 Dated: 20.07.2026

APMSIDC invites tenders through e-procurement platform <https://tender.aeprocurement.gov.in> for 1. RFP for selection of Agency to Design, Development, Implementation along with AI-enabled Functionality implementation and end-to-end Maintenance of Dr. NTR VST 2. RFP for Selection of Agency for operation and maintenance of Sanjeevani - State wide integrated digital care coordination and healthcare delivery system in A.P. 3. Procurement and supply of equipment & furniture to New/Old Govt. Medical colleges/Hospitals under DME in A.P. 4. Various Govt. Hospitals in A.P. under NHM budget. 5. Certain Training Aids/Firefighting Equipment/Systems to A.P. State Disaster Response and Fire Services department under the 15th Finance Commission 6. Critical Care Blocks and IPHLS under PMABHIM in A.P.

For detailed notification and further details please visit the web site <https://apsmhc.ap.nic.in> & www.tender.aeprocurement.gov.in.

APMSIDC will reserve the right to cancel the tenders at any time without assigning any reasons.

for Managing Director

JAYNAGAR-ASANSOL-JAYNAGAR SHRAVANI MELA SPECIAL TRAIN

To clear extra rush of passengers during ensuing Shrawani Mela, 05597/05598 Jaynagar-Asansol-Jaynagar Shrawani Mela Special train will run as per following abstract timings, stoppages, dates of run and composition:

Jaynagar-Asansol			(05597)	(05598)	Asansol-Jaynagar		
Day	Arr.	Dep.	STATIONS		Arr.	Dep.	Day
Fri, Sun,	—	21.00	Jaynagar		06.00	—	Sun,Tue,
Tue	23.50	23.55	↓ Darbhanga		01.45	01.50	Thu
	05.14	05.16	KiuI		17.59	18.01	
Sat,	07.42	07.52	Jasidih		14.30	14.40	Sat,
Mon,	08.55	08.57	Madhupur		14.03	14.05	Mon,
Wed	11.30	—	↑ Asansol		—	13.00	Wed

COMMONWEALTH GAMES: JULY 23-AUGUST 2

A visit to a talent nursery, the winningness of India's successful stomping sports, wistfulness for the disciplines not included, and a widget into what to expect from the compact Games at Glasgow. The Indian Express looks at the sporting footprint

Arnolds of Andhra

Tanishq Vaddi travels through the north of the state, joining the dots that have produced India's finest weightlifting talent over the years

USTAD IS the title bestowed on the winner of Sangidi Rallu, a traditional strength contest held during Pongal in village festivals of northern Andhra Pradesh.

Exported worldwide, black granite is a popular stone of the region. It has been used for years to carve the Sangidi Rallu, a torus weighing 80-220 Kg.

Over time, that folk contest evolved into organised weightlifting in Kondavelagada (pronounced kon-duh-wella-gadaa), a village in Vizianagaram district. The village has produced 20 national and 13 international weightlifters, with successive generations securing government jobs through sport, and lifting their families out of poverty.

Among the latest are sisters Bellana Bhargavi (17) and Bellana Harika (19), who won gold medals at the Commonwealth Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships in Samoa in April 2026. Next week, the tiny village will be in the spotlight once again when Ajay Babu — the son of Valluri Srinivasa Rao, a weightlifting pioneer in these parts — steps on the platform at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow later this month.

Ajay, who is in Glasgow currently, spoke to The Indian Express about continuing a tradition. "In 2010, my father won a bronze medal, and in 2014 Santoshi Matsa claimed silver at the Commonwealth Games. I want to better that and win gold, and participate in the Olympics."

The story of Kondavelagada's remarkable production line began more than three decades ago. In 1991, a young Valluri Srinivasa Rao, Annapurna Challa and her elder brother Ramu were among the many children captivated by the annual Sangidi Rallu competition. Winning it was a matter of immense pride, and the contest drew almost the entire village. Around the same time, weightlifting was gaining popularity across northern Andhra. Inspired by what they had seen elsewhere, a few elderly villagers decided to bring proper weightlifting equipment to Kondavelagada. That decision changed the village's future.

Ramu, whose movement had been restricted by polio, never had the opportunity to become a competitive weightlifter. But he had developed a fascination for physical strength after watching bodybuilders on Doordarshan. Rao, meanwhile, inherited his father's love for Sangidi Rallu and tried his hand at the village contest, though without much success.

Both friends would quietly slip in after the regular Sangidi



(Top) Tilaka Dhananjaya Kumar's Gym in Godalam. (From bottom left) Valluri Srinivas Rao with his medals; Commonwealth Games medal hopeful Valluri Ajay Babu in action; Challa Ramu's gym in Kondavelagada. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Rallu participants finished training around seven or eight o'clock, to experiment with the new equipment.

Flower cultivation - marigold, roses, crossandra, was the village's primary occupation, and Rao's family depended on it for a living. Morning training was followed by long hours in the fields. Rao (47) recalls with a smile, "School was optional."

While training, Rao observed older lifters closely, copied their techniques and picked up whatever advice they were willing to offer. Winning a district-level competition changed everything.

When M.S. Sharma, the district weightlifting coach, asked his parents to send him to his academy, they were thrilled. "I used to cycle from the village to Vizianagaram every day to sell flowers. After that, I would go for training," he recalls. At the 1996, Vizianagaram Nationals, Rao, Ramu and Annapurna travelled to watch India's best lifters compete. "Our jaws dropped," Ramu recalled. "It wasn't just men competing. Women were lifting weights, too."

For Annapurna, that moment proved life-changing. "Within a couple of years of starting, she became a national champion in the rural championships, while Rao became state champion."

When Sharma was transferred to the SAI centre in Eluru,

he invited both to continue training under him. They accepted immediately.

Then, tragedy struck. Just days before they were due to leave for Eluru in 1999, Annapurna died after falling into an open well on the family's farm.

Her death devastated the entire village. Rao no longer wanted to leave. "The whole village had to convince him," Ramu recalled. "There were times when his family didn't even have enough food. We told him that if he went to Eluru, he would at least get three meals a day, become stronger and continue weightlifting."

The argument eventually persuaded him. Eluru transformed Rao's career. Under Sharma, the farmer's son developed into one of Andhra Pradesh's leading weightlifters, winning silver medals at the National Games in Visakhapatnam (2002) and the inaugural Afro-Asian Championships (2003) in Hyderabad. Back home, his success sparked a ripple effect. Children who had watched Rao grow up now wanted to follow the same path.

For Ramu, though, the years after Annapurna's death were far more difficult. "For three or four years, I didn't know what I was doing," he said. Then one day, village elders approached him with a proposal. "We'll help you set up a gym," they told me. "Will you teach our children?"

The faith from his village turned his grief into strength.

By 2005, Kondavelagada had its own coaching centre. And soon, Ramu's trainees were winning national medals. After Rao took voluntary retirement from the Army and returned they built another gym. "Our village has around 3,000 people," Rao said. "Many take loans just to provide proper nutrition for their children. A weightlifter needs Rs 50,000 to 60,000 every month for food and training. Where will these farmers find that kind of money?"

Before Kondavelagada became a weightlifting nursery, there was Amadalavalasa in the neighbouring Srikakulam district. Its Maruthi Yuvajana Vyayama Mandal, produced eight international and 46 national weightlifters, making it the region's original weightlifting powerhouse. Founded in 1969 by tailor K. Amminaidu, the gym laid the foundation for northern Andhra's weightlifting culture. Amminaidu is now 86, partially deaf, and lives a quiet life. He is looked after by his five children, three of whom are weightlifters. "Our inspiration was Kodu Rammurthy Naidu," Amminaidu said.

His son Madhusudan adds that Rammurthy's name is invoked as a blessing for a successful

career. Folklore says Rammurthy from Veeragattam near the Odisha border, discovered an idol of Lord Hanuman while bathing in a pond in the late 1800s. Inspired by the deity, he resolved to become the strongest man in the world.

"He had a special breathing technique that allowed an elephant to walk across wooden planks placed on his chest," former weightlifter Mugithi Appalanaidu recalled the folk tale. "The Vizianagaram king was so impressed that he rewarded him with gold and jewels, and sent him to England and China to display his feats of strength and challenge wrestlers there."

Rammurthy's exploits inspired as he also established a gym in Vizianagaram.

One of those inspired was Amminaidu, a former kusthi

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VALLURI SRINIVASA RAO, LIFTER AJAY BABU'S FATHER

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•BREAKING DOWN INDIA'S CWG MEDAL PROSPECTS

A smaller CWG without India's core sports like shooting, badminton and wrestling means fewer medal opportunities, but they still have a chances across five disciplines.

INDIA WON 61 medals at the 2022 Commonwealth Games edition, but the tally will come down this time due to fewer sports featuring in the quadrennial event. Among the ten events, India is expected to do well in disciplines like Athletics, Weightlifting, Boxing, Lawn Bowls, and Judo.

ATHLETICS: 6 MEDALS INDIA IS sending a strong 32-member squad for the Athletics events, across 22 disciplines. While the medals in track events look tough, India is expected to win in field events. Neeraj Chopra remains the biggest medal hope in men's Javelin throw, but he will be up against a

world-class field with reigning Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem, reigning world champion Keshorn Walcott, two-time world champion Anderson Peters, Julius Yego, and world lead Rumesh Pathirage.

India's biggest medal will be the jumps with Sarvesh Kushare, Tejaswin Shankar in high jump, Sreeshankar Murali, Lokesh Satyanathan in long jump, and Selva Prabhu, Praveen Chithravel in triple jump.

If Parul Chaudhary and Gulveer Singh can deliver a performance of a lifetime as Avinash Sable did in 2022, India can expect 5-6 medals.

BOXING: 8 MEDALS A STRONG Indian contingent, headed by reigning World Champion Jaismine Lamboria and Tokyo Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain, will take to the ring at Glasgow 2026.

The field at the CWG is moderately easy, and India can expect to win close to 8 medals. If there are upsets, the tally can touch 10 medals. In five of the seven weight categories in women's boxing, India will start as the favourites, being the highest-ranked Commonwealth Nation in the World Boxing Rankings. Sakshi Chaudhary (51kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg), and Jaismine

Lamboria (57kg) will start as the outright favourites for gold.

WEIGHTLIFTING: 7 MEDALS TOKYO OLYMPIC medallist Mirabai Chanu will lead India's 12-member weightlifting squad. While Chanu is the best lifter in her category, other Indians also have a good chance to win a medal given the strength of the field. India won 10 medals last time, and one can very well expect 6 or 7 medals this time as well, with Gyaneshwari Devi, Ajaya Babu and Raja Muthupandi the other prospects.

JUDO: 4 MEDALS Tulika Maan and Asmita Dey will be India's biggest hope, with Inunganbi Takhellambam (women's 70kg) and Ishroop Narang (Women's 78kg) being other contenders. India won three medals last time and will look to better the haul this time around.

LAWN BOWLS: 1 MEDAL INDIA WON two medals in Lawn Bowls in Birmingham 2022, both in the team event. This time, there are only singles and doubles events, but given the experience in the squad, which features medalists from the previous edition, India is expected to win one medal at least. In Para Sports, India can win medals in Para Athletics (3 medals) and Para Powerlifting (2 medals).

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE



Jaismine Lamboria (in blue)

Gukesh's road to revival may pass through Chess Olympiad

Amit Kamath Chennai, July 21

JUST A couple of hours before Gukesh D slumped to another defeat, this time to compatriot Pranesh M, Srinath Narayanan was deconstructing the 20-year-old's recent issues over the board. Since becoming world champion in December 2024, Gukesh has yet to win a tournament, a streak unlikely to end at the ongoing Chennai Grand Masters, where he has lost five games in six rounds to be anchored to the bottom in the eight-player tournament.

Srinath's assessment was simple: confidence is Gukesh's superpower, and when he's low on that, it affects his results. "Gukesh is very good at calculation. But there's an element of confidence in his game, which is probably one of the reasons why there are a lot of ups and downs in his play. When he's

really confident, he plays the same way, but he pulls off things. But when his confidence is impacted a bit, there are also big drops in his play," Srinath said.

Srinath holds a unique vantage point in Indian chess. For the past two Olympiads, he has been the Indian men's team's captain, a position he will also hold at the upcoming edition at Samarkand in Uzbekistan in two months' time. He has had a ring-side view to the rise and plateau of India's current golden generation. He points out how the famed confidence that vaulted Gukesh to the world champion's throne hindered him against Arjun Erigaisi on Monday, where he held a winning edge before allowing the game to equalise and then going on to lose.

"When you're down in confidence, you're constantly re-checking your moves and taking a lot longer to make decisions that you'd normally make much



D Gukesh dropped to 31st in the live rankings after this latest loss in Chennai. EXPRESS

faster. This contributed to him (Gukesh) being low on time and as a consequence, when he needed that time (in the end-game) to make some critical decisions, he just didn't have it," said Srinath.

After his defeat to Pranesh on Tuesday, Gukesh slumped to world no.31 in live ratings that

are updated in real time. He has lost 75 rating points in 19 months since becoming the 18th world champion in chess history.

Srinath believes that the upcoming Olympiad might be the event that helps Gukesh turn around his form. He was the Indian team's captain at the 2023 Asian Games when Gukesh had a horrid tournament, losing rating points by heaps in Hangzhou. But he bounced back by winning the Chennai Grand Masters in its inaugural edition, clinching the Candidates, sweeping through the Olympiad in 2024 and then becoming world champion, all in the span of 14 months.

"Confidence is something which can change in a game or two. Everyone has gone through such slumps in their career. If that bad phase changes, Gukesh will suddenly be a completely different player," Srinath said. "Gukesh's confidence could

have grown in yesterday's game against Arjun if things had just gone a little more his way. I feel there is a chance of a turnaround in the Olympiad because unlike closed invitational tournaments which Gukesh has been playing where every player is rated about 2650 or 2700, the Olympiad is more like an open tournament, something which Gukesh hasn't played in a long time."

Different approach

Srinath, who is part of the organising committee of the Chennai Grand Masters, says he is currently in wait-and-watch mode. On Wednesday, when the tournament ends, he'll start reaching out to the five members of his provisional Olympiad team — Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun, Nihal Sarin and Vidit Gujrathi — about preparation for the tournament.

The way the national camp before the Olympiad is held has

also changed considerably over the years. In 2022, Srinath organised multiple two-week camps with the young squad over two months leading up to the Olympiad in Chennai. He said the camps were as intense as those for Candidates tournaments. But for 2024, there was just a Zoom call because the players were jet-setting to tournaments around the world.

"In 2022, we had some very intense training camps. All of us were working long hours on openings. That didn't quite work because it felt like overtraining," Srinath said. "But since the last Olympiad, the idea is to have a good time together. That's all you need for a team like ours."

For the 20-year-old who wears the burden of the world champion's crown and does not seem to be having fun on the board, the Olympiad might just be the tonic he needs to rejuvenate his game.

Now, Pranesh beats chess world champion

Amit Kamath Chennai, July 21

PRANESH M does not know what the Chigorin Club in chess is. Nevertheless, he barged into it on Tuesday with one of the biggest wins of his fledgling career. He defeated world champion Gukesh D in 39 moves in the penultimate round of the Chennai Grand Masters tournament, thus entering an unofficial club he had no idea existed. For the uninitiated, the Chigorin Club consists of grandmasters who have defeated the reigning world champion in a classical game.

Having qualified for the Chennai Grand Masters by winning last year's Challengers tournament, Pranesh is climbing rapidly towards another club: that of 2700-rated GMs.

After losing his opening game to Alireza Firouzja, he has had a stable tournament, holding players from the 2700-club like Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Arjun Erigaisi and Hans Moke Niemann to draws before this significant victory.

Pranesh got a helping hand from Gukesh. There was a point when the world champion had a significant edge before Gukesh's familiar woes of courting time trouble surfaced. The battle between Gukesh and Pranesh saw eval bar fluctuations, but it was a bunch of moves from Gukesh while he was racing against the clock that changed the outlook of the game. "I had beaten him once before, in a tournament in Mumbai in the U13 category, where he had gone on to win the title," Pranesh recalled.



Despite no goal and no assist in the World Cup, Rodri (left) dictated terms in most of Spain's games. AP

The paradox of Rodri

The Spanish captain cannot be captured by a metric. Ask Messi, who spent the final avoiding him like a thief avoids a cop



Sandip G
New Jersey, July 21

RODRI AND AMERICA. It was always meant to be; a unique relationship forged by chance and moulded by destiny. Sixteen years before he kissed the World Cup trophy, confetti showering on him and fireworks wiggling into East Rutherford skies, he was in Connecticut, almost 100 miles from the scene of his conquest, as part of an exchange programme.

His father wanted him to pursue academics in the United States, but he was firm on his ultimate desire to be a footballer. But his father had other plans, and imagining that the American life would alter his son's ambitions, he packed him off to a student programme in Connecticut. Rodri. Suddenly, the quiet teenager from the Madrid suburb of Villanueva de la Cañada found himself in the middle of a forest in Conn-et-ee-cut, as they call it. "It was like I was stepping into a Hollywood movie," he wrote in Player's Tribune. "You know the movies where the kids go to the camp on a big lake and you're climbing trees and sleeping in tents and starting fires with sticks?" Everything felt strange for the true blue Madrid boy.

One day, he called his friends

to play football. They thought it was American football. "No, no, that's not what I meant, soccer," he told them. "Oh, saw-ker. No buddy, no way," they said. He had a football with him and played all alone. Days, nights, in the peak of summer, in the dead of winter. He didn't mind football's improvised version, but he remained, at heart, a dissident loyal to the footie. "Genuine fun! I kind of liked it," he wrote.

He didn't miss home, swiftly learned English, with a Connecticut accent that endeared him to his friends. It would be the same quick grasping skills that made him indispensable in the teams of two antithetical managers, Diego Simeone and Pep Guardiola, the angel and the archangel. But he began to miss home when the World Cup began. "I couldn't even check the internet, so I was in pain," he said.

But the main office had a clunky computer. Every day, he asked the counselors for the score. One of them told him that Spain lost to Switzerland in the first round. His heart sank. "I thought they were pulling a prank." By the knockouts, the counsellors would tell him without asking whether Spain won or not. He was on a canoeing trip when Spain beat Germany in the semifinal. "I never felt so far from home, but also close to home, if you understand what I mean," he would say. He pleaded with the counsellor to let him watch the final on the computer. He did, but the internet was wobbly and he had to

MEASURE OF CONTROL
910
Total number of touches by Rodri, the most by any player in 2026 World Cup
204
Passes completed in the final third, the most for any player
26
Tackles, most by any player
95.3%
Rodri's pass accuracy in the final, his highest in the tournament

“When I was at Villarreal, I was very good with the ball at my feet, but I was still a bit soft. With Diego Simeone, I learned what it means to be the bad guy – to be a bit of a b***** on the pitch.”

RODRI, SPAIN'S GOLDEN BALL-WINNING MIDFIELDER.

find an illegal stream. "When Iniesta scored, I literally started screaming and I ran outside and sprinted around the lake. The guys thought I was crazy."

Sixteen years later, his friends would have realised the essence of his scream. He was holding the most precious trophy in the world aloft. A dream beyond for a Madrid boy.

...

The route from Connecticut to New Jersey took years in the making. A year later, he returned home, and to his father's anguish his son was still in love with the game. He let him be. "It was almost like a drug," he once said. He journeyed from Atletico Madrid's academy to Villarreal's, before returning to Atletico as a senior player. The first big influence in his career was waiting for him, the manager Simeone. The Argentine sensed he has marvelous technical finesse but not the nastiness his teams embodied.

"When I was at Villarreal, I was very good with the ball at my feet, but I was still a bit soft. With Diego Simeone, I learned what it means to be the bad guy – to be a bit of a b***** on the pitch."

Rodri's positional sense is so supreme that he is never out of his place to commit a nasty foul.

A defensive fielder has the image of a tackle-happy, tough mean guy. But the finest of them are not, from the irrepressible Claude Makelele and Sergio Busquets to N'Golo Kante and Rodri. They have more time and space than all, a preternatural sense of the ball, the paths it would travel. This World Cup, he was ranked 97th in the list of offenders. That's the paradox of Rodri, he won the golden ball without a single goal or assist, without topping any of the defensive or attacking metrics. Even in pass completion rate, he sits 44th on the table. So what made him the tournament's most valuable player?

His second, and perhaps most influential, figure in life was Guardiola, who would say: "The way he sees the game, no one else sees, to its finest details, his vision is panoramic." When he arrived in City, he was far from the midfield figurehead he is now. Guardiola advised: "Don't move too much, a holding midfielder does not, move just enough and only when it is required." Guardiola was surprised how fast he learned, and adapted. He enhanced his passing range, polished his positional awareness, and began his ascent to greatness.

In a year, he became irreplaceable for City. Their fortunes have hinged directly on his availability and optimal fitness. "People always look at the players who score goals, but football is much more than that. Rodri controlled every match he played. He dictated the tempo, protected

the defence, recovered possession, started attacks and gave every player around him the confidence to play their football," Guardiola praised him.

In the final, he tied up Messi in knots, so much so that he began avoiding him like a thief would a policeman. Rodri made him play increasingly with the right foot, lethal but not as much as his left peg. Messi would have found traces of his old friend Sergio Busquets. Like the Barcelona cornerstone, he can't be judged with stats, cannot be defined with his nomenclatural role. To label him as a defensive midfielder would be turning a blind eye to his attacking output, to call him a tempo-setter is an inaccurate compartmentalisation. He is, as Luis de la Fuente calls him, the traffic controller, whose role is not as glamorous as the secret agents or the sleuths, but controls the immediate world around him. He is the axis of the compass that lets Spain draw a perfect circle, a man whose occupancy of vital spaces sucks half the belief of his opponents. Argentina would readily vouch for the invisible man that made them anonymous.

He perhaps exists in a state of paradox, a tempo-setter who is a holding midfielder, a disciple of both Simeone and Guardiola, a conductor who is also the lead vocals, and a true blue Madrid boy speaking "Conn-et-ee-cut" English. Also, the best midfielder in the world, a player whose numbers can't capture him, and whose role defies definition.

SIDELINES



Argentina's Leandro Paredes (5) scuffles with Spain's Gavi. AP

Paredes' red card for brawl 'deleted' by FIFA: Report

WHILE FIFA has opened disciplinary proceedings against Argentina for their players' various altercations against their Spanish counterparts, Leandro Paredes, who was seen in a scuffle with Spain's Eric Garcia and Gavi, was given a red card which has since been 'deleted' by the sport's governing body, according to the BBC.

"It was incorrectly reported on FIFA's commentator information system that Paredes had been sent off by referee Slavko Vincic for pushing Spain's Eric Garcia by the throat. Paredes' red card was deleted shortly afterwards and FIFA has confirmed to BBC Sport that no disciplinary action was taken at the time," the report stated. But the

FIFA probe is still on over the ugly incidents that ensued after the final whistle where Spain defeated Argentina 1-0 to win the World Cup. In videos floating on social media, Garcia can be seen falling on the ground in the seconds after the referee blew the final whistle. He then gets up and has heated words with Paredes who then proceeds to push Garcia away with a hand on the latter's neck. Argentina defender Nahuel Molina also reportedly attempted to knock over Rodri. Further, assistant coach Roberto Ayala was seen trying to punch Dani Olmo in the face. Head coach Lionel Scaloni and other players rushed in to deescalate the situation. ENS

Viral photo of Messi, Yamal to get trading card

TOPPS IS creating a trading card of what became a famous photo during the World Cup of Argentina's Lionel Messi holding Spain's Lamine Yamal, the company said Monday. Messi, whom many consider football's greatest player, was photographed holding Yamal, then an infant and now a 19-year-old rising star.

The two met in Sunday's final, with Yamal and Spain defeating Messi and Argentina 1-0. That game was a potential changing of the guard with the 39-year-old Messi perhaps playing in his final World Cup. Playing for Barcelona at the time of the initial meeting with Yamal, Messi took part in a fundraising drive for UNICEF and wound up holding the player who could be the future face of the sport. Yamal has followed in Messi's footsteps by becoming Barcelona's standout player. AP

Garcia to leave Belgium coaching job

RUDI GARCIA is not continuing as Belgium coach after failing to reach agreement with the country's football federation on a contract extension. The Royal Belgian Football Association said that it will not renew Garcia's deal beyond the end of this month, and that it is looking for a successor to the French coach who led the Belgian team to the World Cup quarterfinals, where it was beaten by eventual champion Spain. Garcia was appointed Belgium coach in January 2025 as the successor to the fired Domenico Tedesco. Garcia, who coached several big clubs including Napoli, Marseille and Roma in his much traveled career, had never managed a national side. He touted his achievements in his 18 months as Belgium coach, pointing to the team's World Cup campaign and improved standing since he took over. AP

Batting as per team's need: Tilak on strike-rate criticism

Express News Service
Mumbai, July 21

TILAK VARMA was earmarked as India's long-term No.3 after the team's T20 World Cup triumph in 2024, but over the last two years, his role has steadily evolved. Team combinations and match situations have often pushed him into the middle and lower order, forcing him to adapt from anchoring an innings to finishing one.

The changing responsibilities have reflected in his strike rate, drawing criticism whenever his scoring rate has gone down. Ahead of India's T20I series against Zimbabwe, the vice-captain said he pays little attention to criticism, saying his batting approach changes as per the match situation and the role assigned by the team.

"In this game, you have to bat in different places, and especially in such conditions, it's not easy. At the same point, I always say that I do whatever is required for the team. If I have to stop and play for the team, I stop and play. If I have to hit, I hit and play," Tilak said at a

Being the deputy to new T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer has added another layer of responsibility for the left-hander

press conference on Tuesday. "From Ireland to England, we lost 4-5 wickets in the Powerplay. So going there and hitting and getting out doesn't make sense."

The left-handers said he often has to play against his natural instinct in the interest of the team. "That's what I always have in mind, that I can go and hit the first ball. But at the same point, I'm playing for the country, so there are a lot of responsibilities. So what is the situation for the team? If I have to play for the team till the end, our team planning keeps changing."

Being the deputy to new T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer has added another layer of responsibility. "If you have the vice-captaincy, the team gives you something after thinking about

it. So I want to take the same responsibilities that the management gives me. I'm playing according to that," Tilak added.

India head into the Zimbabwe series after back-to-back disappointments, having lost 2-0 in Ireland before a 4-0 defeat in England. Tilak said the focus was on getting the basics right rather than dwelling on the results. "It has been a big learning since the last series. And we are just looking forward, and want to follow our basics and do well in the coming series. Everyone has played enough domestic cricket and A-series just before this, so they are ready; it's the same thing, just a bigger stage."

"They have played enough matches in the IPL and know how to execute on a bigger stage," he added.

Despite the losses, Tilak insisted there was no sense of panic in the dressing room. He said the priority was to create a positive environment, back every player and use the lessons from the Ireland and England tours to build momentum in the Zimbabwe series.

• WAY AHEAD IN FAST LANE

'Siraj a wonderful example for young pacers'

Venkata Krishna B
Chennai, July 21

FORMER INDIA bowling coach Bharat Arun, who assembled a pace attack that West Indies great Andy Roberts said in 2019 he envied, is set to launch a nation-wide camp to unearth young fast bowlers. Arun's plan is to identify and nurture another Mohammed Siraj, whom he had spotted in 2017 during a net session in Hyderabad and paved his path to the Indian team in 2020.

Since stepping down as India's bowling coach in 2021, Arun runs an academy (Coaching Beyond) in association with Ravi Shastri and R Sridhar in Chennai and Hyderabad. Since leaving the India role, he has been a part of an IPL-winning team - Kolkata Knight Riders in 2024 and is currently part of the Lucknow Super Giants setup.

"Siraj is a wonderful story for other young upcoming fast bowlers to emulate. And in our own way, we want to do something from Coaching Beyond. It's not only a challenge to us, but it's also, I think, one way of doing something for Indian cricket.



Bharat Arun runs academies in association with Ravi Shastri and R Sridhar in Chennai and Hyderabad. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

During Arun's stint, India had the likes of Bumrah, Siraj, Bhuvneshwar, Ishant and Umesh; since then, resources have been thin

bowlers. And most of these fast bowlers around the country do not have the facilities".

"First is the affordability factor. Sometimes there are bowlers who come from different backgrounds, and they are not able to afford it. Or they do not have access to any good inputs to hone their skills."

"Looking at the recent past, there are exceptionally good bowlers hiding in different nooks and corners of our country. It would be an interesting challenge to tap that potential," he added, pointing to the likes of Aaquib Nabi who has emerged from Jammu and Kashmir and won the Ranji Trophy last season.

Laying out his plans is Arun's way of responding to a question on whether he prefers to take

another shot as the bowling coach of the Indian team. After coaching a few seasons in IPL, he is about to embark on his first season of working in the SA20 and The Hundred.

Despite his busy calendar, he still spends a majority of his time at the academy. On a hot summer afternoon in Chennai, where temperatures are touching 38 degrees, he is out coaching a handful of pacers who are bowling to St Kitts & Nevis Patriots, the CPL team that is holding a camp here.

"Continuing as a coach for India, yes, I've had my stint with the team. It was a very enjoyable stint. I think there is room to do a lot of work around all this to contribute more towards the development of cricket in the country. It's not just the Indian team. I think everybody needs a specific time with the Indian team to do that. But there is a different kind of challenge. We are thinking of getting a sponsor to pick a dozen fast bowlers and look to give them scholarships, where we take care of their education, boarding and lodging, and give them full-time coaching," Arun said of his plans.

The need for such a camp is because of what Arun has observed in recent times. The IPL has given him a chance to witness talents like Harshit Rana, Prince Yadav and Mayank Yadav, to name a few, emerge, but he admitted the fast bowling resources had diminished. "I would say yes, it is a phase that keeps going on and off. So that's why, to make sure that the fast bowlers and the supply chain remain consistent, we want to do something in our power to make sure that we contribute a little towards that," the 63-year-old said, with the aim to target fast bowlers in the 18-22 age group for the scholarship programme.

During Arun's stint, India had the likes of Jasprit Bumrah, Siraj, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav; since then, the resources have been thin. While the likes of Arshdeep Singh and Prasidh Krishna have emerged and stayed in India's setup, none are close to cementing their places in any of the formats. And Arun says he would like to give India another pacer like Siraj, who came out of nowhere and became a force to reckon with.